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WILSON'S MISCELLANIES.

CHRISTOPHER AMONG THE MOUNTAINS.

(Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, 1838.)

FORGIVE us, thou most beautiful of mornings! for having overslept the assignation hour, and allowed thee to remain all by thyself in the solitude, wondering why thy worshipper could prefer to thy presence the fairest phantoms that ever visited a dream. And thou hast forgiven us—for not clouds of displeasure these that have settled on thy forehead—the unrepublishing light of thy countenance is upon us—a loving murmur steals into our heart from thine—and pure and holy as a child's, or an angel's, daughter of Heaven! is thy breath.

In the spirit of that invocation we look around us, and as the idea of morning dies, sufficient for our happiness is “the light of common day”—the imagery of common earth. There has been rain during the night—enough, and no more, to enliven the burn, and to brighten its banks—the mists are ascending composedly, with promise of gentle weather—and the sun, so mild that we can look him in the face with unwinking eyes, gives assurance, that as he has risen, so will he reign, and so will he set in peace.

Yestreen we came into this glen at gloaming,—and rather felt than saw that it was beautiful—we lay down at dark, and let the moon and stars canopy our sleep. Therefore it is almost altogether new to us; yet so con-

genial its quiet to the longings of our heart, that all at once it is familiar to us as if we had been sojourning here for many days—as if this cottage were indeed our dwelling-place—and we had retired hither to await the closing of our life. Were we never here before—in the olden and golden time? Those dips in the summits of the mountains seem to recall from oblivion memories of a morning all the same as this, enjoyed by us with a different joy, almost as if then we were a different being, joy then the very element in which we drew our breath, satisfied now to live in the atmosphere of sadness often thickened with grief. 'Tis thus that there grows a confusion among the past times in the dormitory—call it not the burial-place—overshadowed by sweet or solemn imagery—in the inland regions of our soul: nor can we question the recollections as they rise—being ghosts, they are silent—their coming and their going alike a mystery—but sometimes—as now—they are happy hauntings—and age is almost gladdened into illusion of returning youth.

'Tis a lovely little glen as in all the Highlands—yet we know not that a painter would see in it the subject of a picture—for the sprinklings of young trees seem to have been sown capriciously by nature, and there seems no reason why on that hillside, and not on any other, should survive the remains of an old wood. Among the multitude of knolls a few are eminent with rocks and shrubs, but there is no central assemblage, and the green wilderness wantons in such disorder that you might believe the pools there to be, not belonging as they are to the same running water, but each itself a small separate lakelet fed by its own spring. True, that above its homehills there are mountains—and these are cliffs on which the eagle might not disdain to build—but the range wheels away in its grandeur to face a loftier region, of which we see here but the summits swimming in the distant clouds.

God bless this hut! and have its inmates in his holy keeping! They are but few—an aged couple—and their grandchild—a pretty creature and a good—and happy as a bird. Four or five hours' sleep is all we need. This night it was deep—and our thoughts, refreshed by its dew, have unfolded themselves of their own accord, along

with the flowers around our feet. Ha! thou art up and singing, thou human fairy! Start not at the figure sitting beside the well—'tis he who read the chapter—and knelt along with thee and them at the evening prayer.

Set down thy pitcher, my child, and let us have a look at thy happiness—for though thou mayst wonder at our words, and think us a strange old man, coming and going, once and for ever, to thee and thine a shadow and no more, yet lean thy head towards us that we may lay our hands on it and bless it—and promise, as thou art growing up here, sometimes to think of the voice that spake to thee by the Birk-tree-well. Love, fear, and serve God as the Bible teaches—and whatever happens thee, quake not, but put thy trust in Heaven.

Nay—weep not, though we know that thy father is dead, and that thou hast neither sister nor brother. Smile—laugh—sing—as thou wert doing a minute ago—as thou hast done for many a morning—and shall do for many a morning more on thy way to the well—in the woods—on the braes—in the house—often all by thyself when the old people are out of doors not far off—or when sometimes they have for a whole day been from home out of the glen. Forget not our words—and no evil can befall thee that may not, weak as thou art, be borne—and nothing wicked that is allowed to walk the earth, will ever be able to hurt a hair on thy head.

My stars! what a lovely little animal! A tame fawn, by all that is wild—kneeling down—to drink—no—no—at its lady's feet. The colley caught it, thou sayest, on the edge of the auld wood—and by the time its wounds were cured, it seemed to have forgot its mother, and soon learnt to follow thee about to far-off places quite out of sight of this—and to play gamesome tricks like a creature born among human dwellings. What! it dances like a kid—does it—and sometimes you put a garland of wild flowers round its neck—and pursue it like a huntress, as it pretends to be making its escape into the forest!

Look, child, here is a pretty green purse for you, that opens and shuts with a spring—so—and in it there is a gold coin, called a sovereign, and a crooked sixpence. Don't blush—that was a grateful curtsy. Keep the

crooked sixpence for good luck, and you never will want. With the yellow fellow buy a Sunday gown and a pair of Sunday shoes, and what else you like; and now—you two lead the way--try a race to the door--and old Christopher North will carry the pitcher--balancing it on his head--thus--ha! The fawn has it, and, by a neck, has beat Camilla.

We shall breakfast ere we go--and breakfast well too, --for this is a poor man's, not a pauper's hut, and Heaven still grants his prayer—"give us this day our daily bread." Sweeter--richer bannocks o' barley-meal never met the mouth of mortal man--nor more delicious butter. "We salt it, sir, for a friend in Glàsgow—but now and then we take a bite of the fresh--let me put another spoonful of sugar into your tea, sir--do oblige us a', sir, by eatin' as many eggs as you have a mind to, for our hens are gran' layers--you'll maybe find the mutton ham no that bad, though I've kent it fatter--and, as you ha'e a long walk afore you, excuse me, sir, for being sae bauld as to suggest a glass o' speerit in your neist cup. The gudeman is temperate, and he's been sae a' his life—but we keep it for a cordial—and that bottle—to be sure it's a gae big ane—and would thole replenishing—has lasted us syne the New Year."

So presseth us to take care of number one the gudewife, while the gudeman, busy as ourselves, eyes her with a well-pleased face, but saith nothing, and the bonnie wee bit lassie sits on her stool at the window wi' her coggie, ready to do any service at a look, and supping little or nothing, out of bashfulness in presence of Christopher North, who she believes is a good, and thinks may, perhaps, be some great man. Our third bannock has had the gooseberry jam laid on it thick by "the gudewife's ain haun',"—and we suspect at that last wide bite we have smeared the corners of our mouth—but it will only be making matters worse to attempt licking it off with our tongue. Pussie! thou hast a cunning look--purring on our knee—and though those glass een 'o thine are blinking at the cream on the saucer—with which thou jalousiest we intend to let thee wet thy whiskers,—we fear thou mak'st no bones of the poor birdies in the brake, and

that many an unlucky leveret has lost its wits at the spring of such a tiger. Cats are queer creatures, and have an instinctive liking to warlocks.

And these two old people have survived all their children—sons and daughters! Last night they told us the story of their life—and they told it as calmly as if they had been telling of the trials of some other pair. Perhaps, in our sympathy, though we said but little, they felt a strength that was not always theirs—perhaps it was a relief from silent sorrow to speak to one who was a stranger to them, and yet, as they might think, a brother in affliction—but the evening prayer assured us that there is in this hut a Christian composure, far beyond the need of our pity, and sent from a region far beyond the stars.

There cannot be a cleaner cottage. Tidiness, it is pleasant to know, has for a good many years past been establishing itself in Scotland among the minor domestic virtues. Once established it will never decay, for it must be felt to brighten more than could be imagined by our fathers, the whole aspect of life. No need for any other household fairy to sweep this floor. An orderly creature we have seen she is, from all her movements out and in doors—though the guest of but a night. They told us that they had known what are called better days—and were once in a thriving way of business in a town. But they were born and bred in the country; and their manners, not rustic but rural, breathe of its serene and simple spirit—at once Lowland and Highland—to us a pleasant union, not without a certain charm of grace.

What loose leaves are these lying on the Bible? A few odd numbers of the SCOTTISH CHRISTIAN HERALD. We shall take care, our friends, that all the numbers for 1836 and 1837, bound in two large volumes, shall, ere many weeks elapse, be lying for you at the Manse. The excellent editor is a friend of ours—and henceforth you shall be subscribers to the work. Well entitled is he to say—“Literature, science, subjects of general interest, philanthropic and benevolent schemes, all viewed under a purely religious aspect, and mingled with discussions upon the evidences, and doctrines, and duties of our most holy faith, have imparted to our pages a rich and varied interest

which has gained access for this little work to many a Christian home, and we have reason to believe, to many a Christian heart."

The circulation of this cheap Christian periodical—sixteen double-columned beautifully printed royal octavo pages, for three-halfpence is very great—some tens of thousands—and it has often made us happy to see it in solitary places. It is adapted for perusal on week-days as well as Sabbath—for there is a permitted difference in the rest that the labourer enjoys after work from that which ought to pervade all the hours of the seventh day. The names of upwards of a hundred contributors are found among our clergy—the sermons and discourses would fill several volumes printed in the usual form—so would original papers on subjects belonging to the moral or social nature of man; and the extracts, which occupy but a limited portion of its pages, are selected with judgment from a wide range of knowledge. Let us read aloud to you, our worthy friends, a small sacred poem, which we have by heart. Christian, keep your eye on the page, and if we go wrong do not fear to set us right. Have you many psalms and hymns by heart? But we need not ask—for

"Piety is sweet to infant minds,"

what they love they remember—and then how easy—how happy—to get things by heart! Happiest of all—the things held holy on earth as in heaven—because appertaining here to eternal life.

TO THE SCOTTISH CHRISTIAN HERALD. BY THE REV. DUNCAN GRANT, A. M.,
MINISTER OF FORRES.

"Beauteous on our heath-clad mountains,
May our HERALD's feet appear;
Sweet, by silver lakes and fountains,
May his voice be to our ear.
Let the tenants of our rocks,
Shepherds watching o'er their flocks,
Village swain and peasant boy,
Thee salute with songs of joy!

"CHRISTIAN HERALD! spread the story
Of Redemption's wond'rous plan;
'Tis Jehovah's brightest glory,
'Tis his highest gift to man;
Angels on their harps of gold,
Love its glories to unfold;
Heralds who its influence wield,
Make the waste a fruitful field.

"To the fount of mercy soaring,
On the wings of faith and love;
And the depths of grace exploring,
By the light shed from above;
Show us whence life's waters flow,
And where trees of blessing grow,
Bearing fruit of heavenly bloom,
Breathing Eden's rich perfume.

"Love to God and man expressing,
In thy course of mercy speed;
Lead to springs of joy and blessing,
And with heavenly manna feed
Scotland's children high and low,
Till the Lord they truly know,
As to us our fathers told,
He was known by them of old.

"To the young, in season vernal,
Jesus in his grace disclose;
As the tree of life eternal,
'Neath whose shade they may repose,
Shielded from the noontide ray,
And from ev'ning's tribes of prey;
And refresh'd with fruits of love,
And with music from above.

"CHRISTIAN HERALD! may the blessing
Of the Highest thee attend,
That, this chiefest boon possessing,
Thou may'st prove thy country's friend:
Tend to make our land assume
Something of its former bloom,
When the dews of heaven were seen
Sparkling on its pastures green.

"When the voice of warm devotion
 To the throne of God arose—
 Mighty as the sound of ocean,
 Calm as nature in repose;—
 Sweeter, than when Araby
 Perfume breathes from flow'r and tree,
 Rising 'bove the shining sphere,
 To Jehovah's list'ning ear."

You have heard of Mungo Park, we daresay, Christian!
 What! Your mother says he was a cousin of hers—and
 that she was born in the forest—the forest of Ettrick—
 and that she knew the Shepherd! These verses here we
 remember having read two years ago—and we shall now
 refresh our memory by a perusal aloud. Stand between
 our kneecs, child, and hold the paper well up.

ON MUNGO PARK'S FINDING A TUFT OF GREEN MOSS IN THE AFRICAN
DESERT.

"The sun had reached his mid-day height,
 And poured down floods of burning light
 On Afric's barren land;
 No cloudy veil obscured the sky,
 And the hot breeze that struggled by
 Was filled with glowing sand.

"No mighty rock upreared its head
 To bless the wanderer with its shade
 In all the weary plain;
 No palm-trees with refreshing green
 To glad the dazzled eye were seen,
 But one wide sandy main.

"Dauntless and daring was the mind
 That left all home-born joys behind
 These deserts to explore—
 To trace the mighty Niger's course,
 And find it bubbling from its source
 In wilds untrod before.

"And ah! shall we less daring show,
 Who nobler ends and motives know

Than ever heroes dream—
Who seek to lead the savage mind
The precious fountain-head to find
Whence flows salvation's stream?

"Let peril, nakedness and sword,
Hot barren lands, and despot's word
Our burning zeal oppose—
Yet, Martyn-like, we'll lift the voice,
Bidding the wilderness rejoice
And blossom as the rose.

"Sad, faint and weary on the sand
Our traveller sat him down; his hand
Covered his burning head,
Above, beneath, behind, around—
No resting for the eye he found;
All nature seemed as dead.

"One tiny tuft of moss alone,
Mantling with freshest green a stone,
Fixed his delighted gaze—
Through bursting tears of joy he smiled,
And while he raised the tendril wild
His lips o'erflowed with praise.

"Oh, shall not He who keeps thee green,
Here in the waste, unknown, unseen—
Thy fellow exile save?
He who commands the dew to feed
Thy gentle flower, can surely lead
Me from a scorching grave!"

"The heaven-sent plant new hope inspired—
New courage all his bosom fired,
And bore him safe along;
Till with the evening's cooling shade
He slept within the verdant glade,
Lulled by the negro's song.

"Thus, we in this world's wilderness,
Where sin and sorrow—guilt—distress
Seem undisturbed to reign—
May faint because we feel alone,
With none to strike our favourite tone,
And join our homeward strain.

“ Yet, often in the bleakest wild
 Of this dark world, some heaven-born child,
 Expectant of the skies,
 Amid the low and vicious crowd,
 Or in the dwellings of the proud,
 Meets our admiring eyes.

“ From gazing on the tender flower,
 We lift our eye to him whose power
 Hath all its beauty given ;
 Who, in this atmosphere of death,
 Hath given it life, and form, and breath,
 And brilliant hues of heaven.

“ Our drooping faith, revived by sight,
 Anew her pinion plumes for flight,
 New hope distends the breast,
 With joy we mount on eagle wing,
 With bolder tone our anthem sing,
 And seek the pilgrim's rest.”

R. M^cH——, *Larbert*. The clergyman? The verses are beautiful—we wrote some ourselves many years ago on the same incident—but not nearly so good as these—and they have utterly faded from our memory—all but some broken images—two or three lines—and here and there a few floating words.

Three minutes from seven by your house-clock—she gives a clear warning—and three minutes from seven by our watch—rather curious their coincidence to such a nicety—and when she has struck—we must take up our staff and go. Thank thee, bonnie Christian, we had forgot our wallet. There, in with the bannocks and the ham and the eggs—that chicken is really too bad, friends—you must take us for a sad glutton.

“ Zicketty, dicketty, dock,
 The mouse ran up the clock ;
 The clock struck one,
 Down the mouse ran,
 Zicketty, dicketty, dock.”

Come closer, dear Christian, and let us put this to your ear. What a pretty face of wonder! 'Tis a repeater.

Good people—you have work to do in the hay-field—let us part—God bless you—good by—farewell.

Half-an-hour since we parted—and we cannot help being a little sad—and fear we were not so kind to the old people—so considerate—as we ought to have been—and, perhaps, though pleased with us just now, they may say to one another before evening that we were too merry for our years. Nonsense. We were all merry together—and what's the use of wearing a long face, at all times, like a Methodist minister? A Methodist minister! Why, John Wesley was facete, and Whitfield humorous—yet were their hearts fountains of tears—and ours is not a rock—if it be, 'tis the Rock of Horeb.

It has long been well known to the whole world that we are a sad egotist—yet our egotism, so far from being a detraction from our attraction, seems to be the very soul of it, making it impossible in nature for any reasonable being to come within its sphere, without being drawn by sweet compulsion to the old wizard's heart. He is so *humane*! Only look at him for a few minutes, and liking becomes love—love becomes veneration. And all this even before he has opened his lips—by the mere power of his ogles and his temples. In his large mild blue eyes is written not only his nature, but miraculously, in German text, his very name, *Christopher North*. Mrs. Gentle was the first to discover it; though we remember having been asked more than once in our youth by an alarmed virgin on whom we happened at the time to be looking tender, “if we were aware that there was something preternatural in our eyes!” *Christopher* is conspicuous in our right eye—*North* in our left—and when we wish to be incog., we either draw their fringed curtains, or nunlike, keep the tell-tale orbs fixed on the ground. Candour whispers us to confess, that some years ago a child was exhibited at sixpence with *WILLIAM WOOD* legibly in its optics—having been affiliated, by ocular evidence, on a gentleman of that name, who, with his dying breath, disowned the soft impeachment. But in that case nature had written a vile scrawl—in ours her hand is firm, and goes off with a flourish.

Our egotism accompanies us into solitude—nay, is

even more life-pervading there than in the hum of men. There the stocks and stones are more impressible than those we sometimes stumble on in human society, and moulded at our will, take what shape we choose to give them; the trees follow our footsteps, though our lips be mute, and we have left at home our fiddle—more potent we in our reality than the fabled Orpheus. Be hushed, ye streams, and listen unto Christopher! Be chained, ye clouds, and attentive unto North! And at our bidding silent the cataract on the cliff—the thunder on the sky. The sea beholds us on the shore—and his one huge frown transformed into a multitudinous smile, he turns flowing affections towards us along the golden sands, and in a fluctuating hindrance of lovely foam-wreaths envelopes our feet!

Proud was that pool, even now, to reflect OUR IMAGE. Do you recollect that picture in the Excursion—so much admired by Wordsworth—of the Ram and the Shadow of the Ram?

“Thus having reached a bridge, that overarched
The hasty rivulet, where it lay becalmed
In a deep pool, by happy chance we saw
A twofold image; on a grassy bank
A snow-white ram, and in the crystal flood
Another and the same! Most beautiful
On the green turf, with his imperial front
Shaggy and bold, and wreathed horns superb,
The breathing creature stood; as beautiful
Beneath him, showed his shadowy counterpart;
Each had his glowing mountains, each his sky,
And each seem'd centre of his own fair world.
Antipodes unconscious of each other,
Yet, in partition, with their several spheres,
Blended in perfect stillness to our sight.
Ah! what a pity were it to disperse
Or to disturb, so fair a spectacle,
And yet a breath can do it.”

Oh! that the solitary, and the pedlar, and the poet, and the priest and his lady, were here to see a sight more glorious far than that illustrious and visionary ram. Two Christopher Norths—as Highland chieftains

—in the royal tartan—one burning in the air—the other in the water—two stationary meteors, each seeming native to its own element. This setting the heather, that the linn on fire—this a-blaze with war, that tempered into truce—while the sun, astonished at the spectacle, nor knowing the refulgent substance from the resplendent shadow, bids the clouds lie still in heaven, and the winds all hold their breath, that exulting nature may be permitted for a little while to enjoy the miracle she unawares has wrought—alas! gone as she gazes, and gone for ever? Our bonnet has tumbled into the pool—and Christopher—like the ram in the Excursion—stands shorn of his beams—no better worth looking at than the late Laird of Macnab.

Now, since the truth must be told, that was but a flight of fancy—and our apparel is more like that of a Lowland Quaker than a Highland chief. 'Tis all of a snuffy brown—an excellent colour for hiding the dirt. Single-breasted our coatee—and we are in shorts. Were our name to be imposed by our hat, it would be Sir Cloudesly Shovel. On our back a wallet—and in our hand a pole. And thus, not without occasional alarm to the cattle, though we hurry no man's, we go stalking along the sward and swinging across the stream, and leaping over the quagmires—by no means unlike that extraordinary pedestrian who has been accompanying us for the last half hour, far overhead up by yonder, as if he meant mischief; but he will find that we are up to a trick or two, and not easily to be done brown by a native, a cockney of Cloud-Land, a long-legged awkward fellow with a head like a dragon, and proud of his red plush, in that country called thunder-and-lightning breeches, hot very, one should think, in such sultry weather—but confound us if he has not this moment stript them off, and be not pursuing his journey *in puris naturalibus*—yes, as naked as the minute he was born!

We cannot help flattering ourselves—if indeed it be flattery—that though no relative of his, we have a look of the pedlar—as he is painted by the hand of a great master in the aforesaid poem.

"A man of reverend age,
But stout and hale, for travel unimpaired."

An hour or two ago,

"Here was he seen upon the cottage-bench,
Reclining in the shade, as if asleep;
An iron-pointed staff lay at his side."

Again—any one who had chanced to meet us yesterday on our way to the mountains, might have said,

"Him had I marked the day before—alone,
And stationed in the public way, with face
Turned to the sun then setting, while that staff
Afforded to the figure of the man,
Detained for contemplation or repose,
Graceful support," &c.

And again—and even more characteristically

"Plain was his garb :
Such as might suit a rustic sire, prepared
For Sabbath duties ; yet he was a man
Whom no one could have passed without remark.
Active and nervous was his gait ; his limbs
And his whole figure breathed intelligence.
Time had compressed the freshness of his cheeks
Into a narrower circle of deep red,
But had not tamed his eye, that under brows,
Shaggy and gray, had meanings, which it brought
From years of youth ; whilst, like a being made
Of many beings, he had wondrous skill
To blend with knowledge of the years to come,
Human, or such as lie beyond the grave."

In our intellectual characters, we indulge the pleasing hope, that there are some striking points of resemblance, on which, however, our modesty will not permit us to dwell—and in our acquirements, more particularly in plane and spherical trigonometry.

"While yet he lingered in the rudiments
Of science, and among her simplest laws,
His triangles—they were the stars of Heaven.

The silent stars ! oft did he take delight
To measure the altitude of some tall crag,
That is the eagle's birthplace," &c.

So it was with us. Give us but a base and a quadrant—and when a student in Jemmy Millar's class, we could have given you the altitude of any steeple in Glasgow or the Gorbals.

Like the pedlar, in a small party of friends, though not proud of the accomplishment, we have been prevailed on to give a song—"The Flowers of the Forest," "Roy's Wife," or "Auld Langsyne"—

"At request would sing
Old songs, the product of his native hills ;
A skilful distribution of sweet sounds,
Feeding the soul, and eagerly imbibed
As cool refreshing water, by the care
Of the industrious husbandman, diffused
Through a parch'd meadow-field in time of drought."

Our natural disposition, too, is as amiable as that of the
"Vagrant Merchant."

"And surely never did there live on earth
A man of kindlier nature. The rough sports
And teasing ways of children vexed not him :
Indulgent listener was he to the tongue
Of garrulous age ; nor did the sick man's tale,
To his fraternal sympathy addressed,
Obtain reluctant hearing."

Who can read the following lines, and not think of
Christopher North ?

"Birds and beasts,
And the mute fish, that glances in the stream,
And harmless reptile coiling in the sun,
And gorgeous insect hovering in the air,
The fowl domestic, and the household dog—
In his capacious mind he loved them all."

True that our love of

"The mute fish, that glances in the stream,"

is not incompatible with the practice of the "angler's silent trade," or with the pleasure of "filling our panniers." The pedlar, too, we have reason to know, was, like his poet and ourselves—a craftsman, and for love beat the molecatcher at busking a batch of May-flies. The question whether Lascelles himself were his master at a green dragon,

"The harmless reptile coiling in the sun,"

we are not so sure about, having once been bit by an adder, whom, in our simplicity, we mistook for a slow-worm—the very day, by the by, on which we were poisoned by a dish of toadstools, by our own hand gathered for mushrooms. But we have long given over chasing butterflies, and feel, as the pedlar did, that they are beautiful creatures, and that 'tis a sin, between finger and thumb, to compress their mealy wings. The household dog we do, indeed, dearly love, though, when old Surly looks suspicious, we prudently keep out of the reach of his chain. As for "the domestic fowl," we breed scores every spring, solely for the delight of seeing them at their *walks*,

"Among the rural villages and farms;"

and though game to the back-bone, they are allowed to wear the spurs nature gave them—to crow unclipped, challenging but the echoes; nor is the sward, like the *sod*, ever reddened with their heroic blood, for hateful to our ears the war-song,

"Welcome to your gory bed,
Or to victory!"

'Tis our way to pass from gay to grave matter, and often from a jocular to a serious view of the same subject—it being natural to us—and having become habitual from writing occasionally in Blackwood's Magazine. All the world knows our admiration of Wordsworth, and admits that we have done almost as much as Jeffrey to make his poetry popular among the "educated circles."

But we are not a nation of idolators, and worship neither graven images nor man that is born of a woman. We may seem to have treated the pedlar with insufficient respect in that playful parallel between him and ourselves; but there you are wrong again, for we desire thereby to do him honour. We wish now to say a few words on the wisdom of making such a personage the chief character in the *Excursion*.

He is described as endowed by nature with a great intellect, a noble imagination, a profound soul, and a tender heart. It will not be said that nature keeps these her noblest gifts for human beings born in this or that condition of life: she gives them to her favourites—for so, in the highest sense, they are to whom such gifts befall; and not unfrequently, in an obscure place, of one of the FORTUNATI

“The fulgent head
Star-bright appears.”

Wordsworth appropriately places the birth of such a being in a humble dwelling in the Highlands of Scotland.

“Among the hills of Athol he was born;
Where on a small hereditary farm,
An unproductive slip of barren ground,
His parents, with their numerous offspring dwelt;
A virtuous household, though exceeding poor.”

His childhood was nurtured at home in Christian love and truth—and acquired other knowledge at a winter school—for in summer he “tended cattle on the hill”—

“That stood
Sole building on a mountain’s dreary edge.”

And the influence of such education and occupation among such natural objects, Wordsworth expounds in some as fine poetry as ever issued from the cells of philosophic thought,

“So the foundations of his mind were laid.”

The boy had small need of books—

“For many a tale
 Traditionary, round the mountains hung,
 And many a legend, peopling the dark woods,
 Nourished imagination in her growth,
 And gave the mind that apprehensive power
 By which she is made quick to recognise
 The moral properties and scope of things.”

But in the manse there were books—and he read

“Whate’er the minister’s old shelf supplied,
 The life and death of martyrs, who sustained,
 With will inflexible, those fearful pangs,
 Triumphantly displayed in records left
 Of persecution and the Covenant.”

Can you not believe that by the time he was as old as you were when you used to ride to the races on a pony, by the side of your sire the squire, this boy was your equal in knowledge, though you had a private tutor all to yourself, and were then a promising lad, as indeed you are now after the lapse of a quarter of a century? True, as yet he “had small Latin, and no Greek;” but the elements of these languages are best learned—trust us—by slow degrees—by the mind rejoicing in the consciousness of its growing faculties—during leisure hours from other studies—as they were by the Athol adolescent. A scholar—in your sense of the word—he might not be called, even when he had reached his seventeenth year, though probably he would have puzzled you in Livy and Virgil—nor of English poetry had he read much—the less the better for such a mind—at that age, and in that condition—for

“Accumulated feelings pressed his heart
 With still increasing weight; he was o’erpowered
 By nature, by the turbulence subdued
 Of his own mind, by mystery and hope,
 And the first virgin passion of a soul
 Communing with the glorious universe.”

But he had read poetry—ay, the same poetry that Wordsworth’s self read at the same age—and

“Among the hills
He gazed upon that mighty orb of sun,
The divine Milton.”

Thus endowed, and thus instructed,

“By nature, that did never yet betray
The heart that loved her,”

the youth was “greater than he knew,” yet that there was something great in, as well as about him, he felt—

“Thus daily thirsting in that lonesome life,”

for some diviner communication than had yet been vouchsafed to him by the Giver and Inspirer of his restless being.

“In dreams, in study, and in ardent thought,
Thus was he reared ; much wanting to assist
The growth of intellect, yet gaining more,
And every moral feeling of his soul
Strengthened and braced, by breathing in content
The keen, the wholesome air of poverty,
And drinking from the well of homely life.”

You have read, our bright, bold neophyte, for we cut the squire, the song at the feast of Brougham Castle, upon the restoration of Lord Clifford, the shepherd, to the estates and honours of his ancestors.

“Who is he that bounds with joy
On Carrock's side, a shepherd boy ?
No thoughts hath he but thoughts that pass
Light as the wind along the grass.
Can this be he that hither came
In secret, like a smother'd flame ?
For whom such thoughtful tears were shed,
For shelter and a poor man's bread !”

The same noble boy whom his highborn mother in disastrous days, had confided when an infant to the care of a peasant. Yet there he is no longer safe—and

"The boy must part from Mosedale's groves,
 And leave Blencathera's rugged coves,
 And quit the flowers that summer brings
 To Glenderamakin's lofty springs;
 Must vanish, and his careless cheer
 Be turned to heaviness and fear."

Sir Launcelot Throlkeld shelters him till again he is free to set his foot on the mountains.

"Again he wanders forth at will,
 And tends a flock from hill to hill:
 His garb is humble; ne'er was seen
 Such garb with such a noble mien;
 Among the shepherd grooms no mate
 Hath he, a child of strength and state."

So lives he till he is restored—

"Glad were the vales, and every cottage hearth;
 The shepherd-lord was honoured more and more;
 And ages after he was laid in earth,
 'The good Lord Clifford' was the name he bore!"

Now mark—that poem has been declared by one and all of the "poets of Britain" to be equal to any thing in the language; and its greatness lies in the perfect truth of the profound philosophy which so poetically delineates the education of the naturally noble character of Clifford. Does he sink in our esteem because at the feast of the restoration he turns a deaf ear to the fervent harper who sings,

"Happy day and happy hour,
 When our shepherd in his power,
 Mounted, mailed, with lance and sword,
 To his ancestors restored,
 Like a re-appearing star,
 Like a glory from afar,
 First shall head the flock of war?"

No—his generous nature is true to its generous nurture; and how deeply imbued with the goodness he had too long loved in others ever to forget

"The silence that is amid the starry hills,"

appear noblest when showing himself faithful in his own hall to the "huts where poor men lie;" while we know not, at the close, which life the poet has most glorified—the humble or the high—whether the Lord did the shepherd more ennobled, or the shepherd the Lord.

Now, we ask, is there any essential difference between what Wordsworth thus records of the high-born shepherd-Lord and what he records of the low-born youth in the *Excursion*? None. They are both educated among the hills; and according to the nature of their own souls and that of their education, is the progressive growth and ultimate formation of their character. Both are exalted beings—because both are wise and good—but to his own coeval he has given, besides eloquence and genius,

"The vision and the faculty divine,"

That,

"When years had brought the philosophic mind,"

he might walk through the dominions of the intellect and the imagination, a sage and a teacher.

But as yet he is in his eighteenth year, and

"Is summoned to select the course
Of humble industry that promised best
To yield him no unworthy maintenance."

For a season he taught a village school, which many a fine, high, and noble spirit has done and is doing; but he was impatient of the hills he loved, and

"That stern yet kindly spirit, who constrains
The Savoyard to quit his native rocks,
The freeborn Swiss to leave his narrow vales
(Spirit attached to regions mountainous
Like their own steadfast clouds), did now impel
His restless mind to look abroad with hope."

It had become his duty to choose a profession—a trade—a calling. He was not a gentleman, mind ye, and had probably never so much as heard a rumour of the exis-

tence of a silver fork: he had been born with a wooden spoon in his mouth,—and lived, partly from choice, and partly from necessity, on a vegetable diet. He had not ten pounds in the world he could call his own; but he could borrow fifty, for his father's son was to be trusted to that amount by any family that chanced to have it among the Athol hills—therefore he resolved on “a hard service,” which

“Gained merited respect in simpler times;
When squire, and priest, and they who round them dwelt
In rustic sequestration, all dependent
Upon the PEDLAR's toil, supplied their wants,
Or pleased their fancies with the ware he brought.”

Could Alfred have ceased to be Alfred had he lived twenty years in the hut where he spoiled the bannocks? Would Gustavus have ceased to be Gustavus had he been doomed to dree an ignoble life in the obscurest nook in Dalecarlia? Were princes and peers in our day degraded by working, in their expatriation, with head or hand for bread? Are the Polish patriots degraded by working at eighteen-pence a day, without victuals, on embankments of railroads? “At the risk of giving a shock to the prejudices of artificial society, I have ever been ready to pay homage to the aristocracy of nature, under a conviction that vigorous human-heartedness is the constituent principle of true taste.” These are Wordsworth's own words, and deserve letters of gold. He has given many a shock to the prejudices of artificial society; and in ten thousand cases, where the heart of such society was happily sound at the core, notwithstanding the rotten kitchen-stuff with which it was encrusted, the shocks have killed the prejudices; and men and women, encouraged to consult their own breasts, have heard responses there to the truths uttered in music by the high-souled bard, assuring them of an existence there of capacities of pure delight, of which they had either but a faint suspicion, or, because “of the world's dread laugh,” feared to indulge, and nearly let die.

Mr. Wordsworth quotes from Heron's *Scotland* an interesting passage illustrative of the life led in our country

at that time by that class of persons from whom he has chosen one—not, mind you, imaginary, though for purposes of imagination—adding that “his own personal knowledge emboldened him to draw the portrait.” In that passage Heron says, “As they wander, each alone, through thinly inhabited districts, they form habits of reflection, and of sublime contemplation,” and that with all their qualifications, no wonder they should contribute much to polish the roughness and soften the rusticity of our peasantry. “In North America,” says he, “travelling merchants from the settlements have done and continue to do much more towards civilizing the Indian natives than all the missionaries, Papist or Protestant, who have ever been sent among them;” and, speaking again of Scotland, he says, “it is not more than twenty or thirty years, since a young man going from any part of Scotland to England for the purpose to *carry the pack*, was considered as going to lead the life, and acquire the fortune, of a gentleman. When, after twenty years’ absence, in that honourable line of employment, he returned with his acquisitions to his native country, he was regarded as a gentleman to all intents and purposes.” We have ourselves known gentlemen who had carried the pack—one of them a man of great talents and acquirements—who lived in his old age in the highest circles of society. Nobody troubled their head about his birth and parentage—for *he was then very rich*—but you could not sit ten minutes in his company without feeling that he was “one of God Almighty’s gentlemen,” belonging to the “aristocracy of Nature.”

Look then on the PEDLAR—and be grateful to Wordsworth

“From his native hills
He wandered far; much did he see of men,
Their manners, their enjoyments, and pursuits,
Their passions and their feelings; chiefly those
Essential and eternal in the heart,
That, ’mid the simpler forms of rural life,
Exist more simple in their elements,
And speak a plainer language. In the woods
A lone enthusiast, and among the fields,
Itinerant in his labour, he had passed

The better portion of his time; and there
 Spontaneously had his affections thriven
 Amid the beauties of the year, the peace
 And liberty of nature; there he kept
 In solitude and solitary thought
 His mind in a just equipoise of love.
 Serene it was, unclouded with the cares
 Of ordinary life; unvexed, unwarped
 By painful bondage. In his steady course,
 No piteous revolutions had he felt,
 No wild varieties of joy and grief
 Unoccupied by sorrow of its own,
 His heart lay open; and, by nature tuned
 And constant disposition of his thoughts
 To sympathy with man, he was alive
 To all that was enjoyed where'er he went,
 And all that was endured; for in himself
 Happy, and quiet in his cheerfulness,
 He had no painful pressure from without,
 That made him turn aside from wretchedness,
 With coward fears. He could afford to suffer
 With those whom he saw suffer. Hence it came
 That in our best experience he was rich,
 And in the wisdom of our daily life.
 For hence, minutely, in his coming rounds,
 He had observed the progress and decay
 Of many minds, of minds and bodies too;
 The history of many families;
 How they had prospered; how they were o'erthrown,
 By passion or mischance; or such misrule
 Among the unthinking masters of the earth
 As makes the nations groan."

What was to hinder such a man—thus born and thus
 bred—with such a youth and such a prime—from being
 in his old age worthy of walking among the mountains
 with Wordsworth, and descanting

"On man, on nature, and on human life?"

And remember he was a *Scotsman*—a compatriot of
 CHRISTOPHER NORTH.

What would you rather have had the sage in the *Excursion*
 to have been? The senior fellow of a college?
 A head? A retired judge? An ex-lord-chancellor? A

nabob? A banker? A millionaire? or, at once, to condescend on individuals, Natus Consumere Fruges, Esq.? or the Honourable Custos Rotulorum?

Look into life and watch the growth of the soul. Men are not what they seem to the outward eye—mere machines moving about in customary occupations—productive labourers of food and wearing apparel—slaves from morn to night at task-work set them by the wealth of nations. They are the children of God. The soul never sleeps—not even when its wearied body is heard snoring by people living in the next street. All the souls now in this world are for ever awake; and this life, believe us, though in moral sadness it has often been rightly called so, is no dream. In a dream we have no will of our own, no power over ourselves; ourselves are not felt to be ourselves; our familiar friends seem strangers from some far off country; the dead are alive, yet we wonder not; the laws of the physical world are suspended, or changed, or confused by our phantasy; intellect, imagination, the moral sense, affection, passion, are not possessed by us in the same way we possess them out of that mystery: were life a dream, or like a dream, it would never lead to heaven.

Again, then, we say to you, look into life and watch the growth of the soul. In a world where the ear cannot listen without hearing the clank of chains, the soul may yet be free as if it already inhabited the skies. For its Maker gave it LIBERTY OF CHOICE OF GOOD OR OF EVIL—and if it has chosen the good it is a king. All its faculties are then fed on their appropriate food provided for them in nature. The soul then knows where the necessities and the luxuries of its life grow, and how they may be gathered—in a still sunny region inaccessible to blight—"no mildewed ear blasting his wholesome brother."

"And thou shalt summer high in bliss upon the hills of God."

Go read the EXCURSION then—venerate the PEDLAR—pity the SOLITARY—respect the PRIEST, and love the POET.

So charmed have we been with the sound of our own

voice—of all sounds on earth the sweetest surely to our ears—and, therefore, we so dearly love the monologue, and from the dialogue turn averse, impatient of him ycleped the interlocutor, who like a shallow brook, will keep prattling and bubbling on between the still deep pools of our discourse, which nature feeds with frequent waterfalls; so charmed have we been with the sound of our own voice, that, scarcely conscious the while of more than a gentle ascent along the sloping sward of a rural Sabbath-day's journey, we perceive now that we must have achieved a Highland league—five miles—of rough up-hill work, and are standing tiptoe on the mountain top. True that his altitude is not very great—somewhere we should suppose, between two and three thousand—far higher than the Pentlands—somewhat higher than the Ochils—a middle-sized Grampian. Great painters and poets know that power lies not in mere measureable bulk. Atlas, it is true, is a giant, and he has need to be so, supporting the globe. So is Andes; but his strength has never been put to proof, as he carries but clouds. The Cordilleras—but we must not be personal—so suffice it to say, that soul, not size, equally in mountains and in men, is and inspires the true sublime. Mont Blanc might be as big again; but what then, if without his glaciers?

These mountains are neither immense nor enormous—nor are there any such in the British Isles. Look for a few of the highest on Riddell's ingenious scale—in Scotland, Ben-nevis, Helvellyn in England, in Ireland the Reeks; and, in print, they are mere molehills to Chimborazo. But in nature they are the hills of the eagle. And think ye not that an eagle is as familiar with the sky as a condor? That vulture—for vulture he is—flies league high—the golden eagle is satisfied to poise himself but a mile above the loch, which, judged by the rapidity of its long river's flow, may be a thousand feet or more above the level of the sea. From that height methinks the bird-royal, with the golden eye, can see the rising and the setting sun, and his march on the meridian, without a telescope. If ever he fly by night—and we think we have seen a shadow passing the stars that was on the wing of life—he must be a rare astronomer.

“ High from the summit of a craggy cliff
 Hung o’er the deep, such as amazing frown
 On utmost Kilda’s shore, whose lonely race
 Resign the setting sun to Indian worlds,
 The royal eagle rears his vigorous young,
 Strong-pounced, and burning with paternal fire.
 Now fit to raise a kingdom of their own
 He drives them from his fort, the towering seat
 For ages of his empire ; which in peace
 Unstained he holds, while many a league to sea
 He wings his course, and preys in distant isles.”

Would to Heaven we had written these lines and the following ! Which are the nobler, Thomson’s or Campbell’s ?

“ Not such
 Was this proud bird ; he clove the adverse storm
 And cuffed it with his wings. He stopped his flight
 As easily as the Arab reins his steed,
 And stood at pleasure ’neath Heaven’s zenith, like
 A lamp suspended from its azure dome.
 Whilst underneath him the world’s mountains lay
 Like molehills, and her streams like lucid threads.
 Then downward, faster than a falling star,
 He neared the earth, until his shape distinct
 Was blackly shadowed on the sunny ground !
 And deeper terror hushed the wilderness,
 To hear his nearer whoop. Then, up again
 He soared and wheeled. There was an air of scorn
 In all his movements,—whether he threw round
 His crested head to look behind him, or
 Lay vertical and sportively displayed
 The inside whiteness of his wing declined,
 In gyres and undulations full of grace,
 An object beautifying heaven itself.

“ He—reckless who was victor, and above
 The hearing of their guns—saw fleets engaged
 In flaming combat. It was nought to him
 What carnage, Moor or Christian, strewed their decks,
 But if his intellect had matched his wings,
 Methinks he would have scorned man’s vaunted power
 To plough the deep ; his pinions bore him down
 To Algiers the warlike, or the coral groves
 That blush beneath the green of Bona’s waves ;

And traversed in an hour a wider space
Than yonder gallant ship, with all her sails
Wooing the winds, can cross from morn till eve.
His bright eyes were his compass, earth his chart,
His talons anchored on the stormiest cliff,
And on the very light-house rock he perched
When winds churned white the waves."

We too, are an eagle, and therefore proud of you our Scottish mountains, as you are of us. Stretch yourself up to your full height as we now do to ours—and let "Andes, giant of the western star," but dare to look at us and we will tear the "meteor standard to the winds unfurled," from his cloudy hands. There you stand—and were you to rear your summits much higher into heaven you would alarm the hidden stars.

Yet we have seen you higher—but it was in storm. In calm like this, you do well to look beautiful—your solemn altitude suits the sunny season, and the peaceful sky. But when the thunder at mid-day would hide your heads in a night of clouds, you thrust them through the blackness, and show them to the glens, crowned with fire.

Then are they a sea of mountains! No—they are mountains in a sea. And what a sea! Waves of water, when at the prodigious, are never higher than the foretop of a man-of-war. Waves of vapour—they alone are ever seen flying mountains high—but they dash, they howl not—and in their silent ascension, all held together by the same spirit, but perpetually changing its beautiful array, where order seems ever and anon to come in among disorder, there is a grandeur that settles down in the soul of youthful poet roaming in delirium among the mountain glooms, and "pacifies the fever of his heart."

Call not now these vapours waves; for motion, movement there is none among the ledges, and ridges, and roads, and avenues, and galleries, and groves, and houses, and churches, and castles, and fairy palaces—all framed of mist. Far up among and above that wondrous region through which you hear voices of waterfalls deepening the silence, behold hundreds of mountain-tops—blue, purple, violet—for the sun is shining straight on some

and aslant on others—and on those not at all ; nor can the shepherd at your side, though he has lived there all his life, till after long pondering, tell you the names of those most familiar to him ; for they seem to have all interchanged sites and altitudes, and “ Black Ben-hun, the Eagle-Breeder ” himself looks so serenely in his rainbow, that you might almost mistake him for Ben Louey, or the Hill of Hinds.

Have you not seen sunsets in which the mountains were embedded in masses of clouds all burning and blazing—yes, blazing—with unimagnable mixtures of all the colours that ever were born—intensifying into a glory that absolutely became insupportable to the soul as insufferable to the eyes—and that left the eyes for hours after you had retreated from the supernatural scene, even when shut, all filled with floating films of cross-lights, cutting the sky-imagery into gorgeous fragments,—and were not the mountains of such sunsets, whether they were of land or of cloud, sufficiently vast for your utmost capacities and powers of delight and joy, longing to commune with the region thou feltest to be in very truth heaven—nor could the spirit, entranced in admiration, conceive at that moment any heaven beyond—while the senses themselves seemed to have had given them a revelation that, as it was created, could be felt but by your own immortal soul ?

Let us not be afraid—we are in no danger of getting metaphysical—that disease is either sudden or lingering death to the sense of the mighty in nature. It elevates the soul to be in the body near the sky—at once on earth and in heaven. In the body ? Yes—we feel at once fettered and free. In time we wear our fetters, and heavy though they be, and painfully rivetted on, seldom do we welcome death coming to strike them off—but groan at sight of the executioner. In eternity we believe that all is spiritual—and in that belief, which doubt sometimes shakes but to prove its foundation lies rooted far down below all earthquakes, endurable is the sound of dust to dust. Poets speak of the spirit, while yet in the flesh, blending, mingling, being absorbed in the great forms of the outward universe, and they speak as if such

absorption were celestial and divine. But is not this a material creed? Let it be described, as it is by Wordsworth, as one of the many moods of imagination in which there is no blame; not, as it is by Byron, as the utmost height to which she can aspire. Let Imagination beware how she seeks to glorify the objects of the senses, and having glorified them, to elevate them into a kindred being with our own, exalting them that we may claim with them that kindred being, as if we belonged to them and not they to us, forgetting that they are made to perish, we to live for ever!

“Is it not better, then, to be alone,
And love Earth only for its earthly sake,
By the blue rushing of the arrowy Rhone,
Or the pure bosom of its nursing lake,
Which feeds it as a mother who doth make
A fair but froward infant her own care,
Kissing its cries away as these awake;—
Is it not better thus our lives to wear,
Than join the crushing crowd, doom'd to inflict or bear?

“I live not in myself, but I become
Portion of that around me; and to me
High mountains are a feeling, but the hum
Of human cities torture; I can see
Nothing to loathe in nature, save to be
A link reluctant in a fleshly chain,
Class'd among creatures, when the soul can flee,
And with the sky, the peak, the heaving plain
Of ocean, or the stars, mingle, and not in vain.

“And thus I am absorb'd, and this is life;
I look upon the peopled desert past,
As on a place of agony and strife,
Where, for some sin, to sorrow I was cast,
To act and suffer, but remount at last
With a fresh pinion; which I feel to spring,
Though young, yet waxing vigorous, as the blast
Which it would cope with, on delighted wing,
Spurning the clay-cold bonds which round our being cling.

“And when, at length, the mind shall be all free
From what it hates in this degraded form,
Reft of its sacred carnal life, save what shall be
Existent happier in the fly and worm,—
When elements to elements conform,

And dust is as it should be, shall I not
 Feel all I see, less dazzling, but more warm?
 The bodiless thought? the spirit of each spot?
 Of which, even now, I share at times the immortal lot?

“Are not the mountains, waves, and skies, a part
 Of me and of my soul, as I of them?
 Is not the love of these deep in my heart
 With a pure passion? should I not contemn
 All objects, if compared with these? and stem
 A tide of suffering rather than forego
 Such feelings for the hard and worldly phlegm
 Of those whose eyes are only turn'd below,
 Gazing upon the ground, with thoughts which dare not glow!”

Has not the tongue of fame proclaimed these, and others
 such as these, to be glorious verses flowing from the fount
 of inspiration? Yet satisfied have they not our soul here
 breathing undisturbedly on the mountain-top. The first
 stanza, methinks, is of little worth. What says it? That
 'tis better to “love earth only for its earthly sake,” “than
 join the crushing crowd, doom'd to inflict or bear.” Is
 that a revelation from a great poet's heart? A stale
 truism, unadorned with one grace of speech.

“Is it not better, then, to be alone”—

“Is it not better *thus our lives to wear.*”

“Repetitions wearisome of sense” are these—“most
 tolerable and not to be endured.” The image of the lake
 as a nursing mother, and of the Rhone as a froward
 infant, is irreconcilable with nature, dead or alive—and
 is neither more nor less than absolute nonsense. Then
 how feeble throughout the expression!” A mother who
doth make a fair but froward infant *her own care!!*”
 “Kissing its cries away *as these awake!!!*” Poor ex-
 pletives, not permissible even in the wet-nurse school of
 prose. Then how childish for his lordship, in the very
 stanza in which, with affected passion, which is always
 inconsistent, he exclaims,

“Is it not better, then, to be alone,
 And love earth only for its earthly sake?”

How childish in his lordship to illustrate the sincerity and depth of *that* love, by such maudlin drivell about *another* love, which he was desirous to show he despised, or regarded with disgust!

The second stanza is a mere hubbub of words. He says—

“I live not in myself, but I become
Portion of that around me; *and to me*
High mountains are a feeling”——

Bah! If you become a portion of that around you, you become a portion of the high mountains—and thus incorporated with them, how can *they* be to you a *feeling*? “But the hum of human cities *torture*” is here impertinent—except to prove that as that hum is outward to you, so are those high mountains, and therefore the “feeling” as much *caused* by them as the “torture” by the human cities. But you would make simpletons believe that you were “portion of that around you”—of the very cause of the effect—that you are at once a cause and an effect—in good truth, prating, like Polonius, “how this effect defective comes by cause.” You say, “I can see *nothing to loathe* in nature!” and *that* the very moment you have been telling us that, through intensity of love, you have “become portion of that around you.” Imagine a lover in his mistress’s arms in a paroxysm of passion, gaspingly reaching at last this climax of bliss-expressive speech, “I can see nothing to loathe in thee!” “Save to be a link reluctant in a fleshly chain” loses more and more of the little meaning it seems to have at first the longer you look at it. “Class’d among creatures, when the soul can flee,” is worse than nonsense—it is folly; for are not they to whom it is here said to flee “creatures”—the sky, the peak, the sea, and the stars? “Mingle, and *not in vain*,” concludes the big-mouthed bluster with an infant’s cry.

In the next stanza the poet begins with repeating himself—

“And thus I am absorbed, and this is life.”

The immediate effect of this absorption is the vivid

remembrance of all his past human life! Had he been absorbed, there would have been everlasting oblivion of that troubled dream. But to be absorbed is one thing, and to say you are is another; and worse still, he speaks in poor repetition of "remounting at last with a *fresh pinion*," "and a *delighted wing*," an image by no means new, and destructive of the thought of absorption.

In the third stanza there is nothing about either absorption or wings, but after some ugly raving, we are presented with that very intelligible line,

"When elements to elements conform,"

in which conformation the poet asks,

———"Shall I not
Feel all I see less dazzling but more warm?"

We shall not presume to say how that may be—but on the first blush of the matter we do not see why the spirit's perception and emotion, "when elements to elements conform," should be "*less* dazzling but *more* warm" than during its mortal life.

"The bodiless thought, the *spirit of each spot*,"

is a poor line—very; and the Alexandrine "goes not forth conquering and to conquer."

In the fourth stanza he returns to the *pet* fancy that he and his soul are a part of the mountains, waves, and skies, and they of him and his soul.

"Elements to elements conform."

If so, what more would he have?

"Is not the love of these *deep* in my heart
With a pure passion?"

is surely an unnecessary question—ill-worded—after all the preceding talk about blending, and mingling, and absorption, and so forth. "If compared with these" is dull, heavy, and formal; "rather than forego such feel-

ings" even more so; and to forego such feelings "for the hard and worldly phlegm" of people

"Gazing upon the ground *with thoughts which dare not glow*," would, indeed, argue shameful timidity in the heart of a man-mountain.

The truth is, and we will speak it, that Byron, with all his abuse of Wordsworth, knew that he was a great poet, and felt that in all the poetry in which he speaks of nature

"He was attired
With sudden brightness, like a man inspired;"

that he touched the forms of inanimate nature with Promethean fire, not stolen from, but bestowed by heaven, and that 'twas among the rights, privileges, and duties of his vocation

"To create a soul
Under the ribs of death."

Some people have said that Wordsworth is or was a Pantheist, and lines from his "River Wye" have been quoted, supposed by them to shadow forth this creed. Such people should not read poetry at all, but occupy themselves in overlooking their accounts. Byron—we speak of him as a poet—was a Theist, or a Pantheist, or a Deist, as he happened to be in the mood—or as this no-belief or that seemed best suited for a series of stanzas to astonish the natives. We have seen what he made by trying to "mingle with the universe." In one of the most admired passages in the third book of the *Childe*, throughout the whole of which he is haunted by Wordsworth, whom he would, all in vain, hate and imitate—while declaring that he has delivered himself up, soul and body, to the feeling of the infinite, the supersensual, and the spiritual, sympathizes with the early Persian in making

"His altar the high places, and the peak
Of earth o'ergazing mountains,"

and exclaims,

“Come and compare
Columns and idol-dwellings, Goth or Greek,
With nature's realms of worship, earth and air,
Nor fix on fond abodes to circumscribe thy prayer;”

even in that very mood of ecstacy, rapt and inspired beyond this “visible diurnal sphere” by the more glorious aspects itself assumes, he destroys our delusion, and lets us into the secret of his own—or rather into that of his deception—by a single blow that jars all the nerves in our body—

“Oh! night,
And storm and darkness, yet are wondrous strong,
Yet lovely in your strength *as is the light*
Of a dark eye in woman!!!”

There are some fine and noble things in these same stanzas, but mixed with baser matter, and that, too, at the very moment when the soul in its emotion of grandeur was desiring nothing but the truth.

“Far along,
From peak to peak, the rattling crags among,
Leaps the live thunder”

is glorious; but, alas! how could the same man who said *that* say

“And now the *glee*
Of the loud *hills* shakes with its mountain-mirth,
As if they did rejoice o'er a young earthquake's birth!!”

Now turn to Wordsworth—not on account of any similarity of style, for there is none, between him and Byron—nor yet on account of such similarity between the objects dealt with, for there is little, except that they are in both cases objects of nature—but on account of the manifest but unsuccessful straining, in the stanzas we have been reading, after the spirit of the communion which Wordsworth holds in his poetry with all outward things.

" These beauteous forms,
 Through a long absence, have not been to me
 As is a landscape to a blind man's eye :
 But oft, in lonely rooms, and mid the din
 Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
 In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
 Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart ;
 And passing even into my purer mind,
 With tranquil restoration :—feelings, too,
 Of unremembered pleasure : such, perhaps,
 As have no slight or trivial influence
 On that best portion of a good man's life,
 His little, nameless, unremembered acts
 Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
 To them I may have owed another gift
 Of aspect more sublime ; that blesses most
 In which the burthen of the mystery,
 In which the heavy and the weary weight
 Of all this unintelligible world,
 Is lighten'd :—that serene and blessed mood,
 In which the affections gently lead us on—
 Until the breath of this corporeal frame,
 And even the motion of our human blood
 Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
 In body, and become a living soul :
 While with an eye made quiet by the power
 Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
 We see into the life of things.

" If this
 Be but a vain belief, yet, oh ! how oft,
 In darkness, and amid the many shapes
 Of joyless daylight ; when the fretful stir
 Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
 Has hung upon the beatings of my heart—
 How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
 O silvan Wye ! Thou wanderer through the woods,
 How often has my spirit turned to thee !
 And now with gleams of half-extinguished thought,
 With many recognitions dim and faint,
 And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
 The picture of the mind revives again :
 While here I stand, not only with the sense
 Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts,
 That in this moment there is life and food

For future years. And so I dare to hope,
Though changed, no doubt, from what I was when first
I came among these hills.

“When like a roe
I bounded o’er the mountains, by the sides
Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
Wherever nature led: more like a man
Flying from something that he dreads, than one
Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then
(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
And their glad varied moments all gone by)
To me was all in all. I cannot paint
What then I was. The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours and their forms, were then to me
An appetite; a feeling and a love
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye.

“That time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mourn, nor murmur; other gifts
Have followed; for such loss I would believe
Abundant recompense. For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth, but hearing oftentimes
The still sad music of humanity,
Not harsh nor grating, but of amplest power
To soften and subdue.

“And I have felt
A passion that disturbed me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interposed,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting sun,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and on the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects and all thought
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains; and of all that we behold
From this green earth; of all the mighty world
Of eye and ear, both what they half create

And what perceive ; well pleased to recognise,
 In nature and the language of the sense,
 The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
 The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
 Of all my moral being."

What divine exaltation, and what divine composure !
 Poetry, philosophy, religion. And clear as light—har-
 monious as music—the perfectly beautiful language of
 the Revelation !

Or turn to that glorious passage in the Excursion—
 but the mountains all wear an unusual hush, and we
 shall give it utterance to glorify the gloom.

"Such was the boy—but for the growing youth
 What soul was his, when from the naked top
 Of some bold headland, he beheld the sun
 Rise up, and bathe the world in light ! he looked—
 Ocean and earth, the solid frame of earth
 And ocean's liquid mass, beneath him lay
 In gladness and deep joy. The clouds were touched,
 And in their silent faces could he read
 Unutterable love. Sound needed none,
 Nor any voice of joy ; his spirit drank
 The spectacle : sensation, soul and form
 All melted into him ; they swallowed up
 His animal being ; in them did he live,
 And by them did he live ; they were his life
 In such access of mind, in such high hour
 Of visitation from the living God,
 Thought was not ; in enjoyment it expired.
 No thanks he breathed, he proffered no request ;
 Rapt into still communion that transcends
 The imperfect offices of prayer and praise.
 His mind was a thanksgiving to the Power
 That made him ; it was blessedness and love !
 A herdsman on the lonely mountain top,
 Such intercourse was his, and in this sort
 Was his existence oftentimes *possessed*.
 O then how beautiful, how bright appeared
 The written promise ! Early had he learned
 To reverence the volume that displays
 The mystery, the life which cannot die ;
 But in the mountains did he *feel* his faith.

All things, responsive to the writing, there
 Breathed immortality, revolving life,
 And greatness still revolving ; infinite ;
 There littleness was not ; the least of things
 Seemed infinite ; and then his spirit shaped
 Her prospects, nor did he believe,—he saw
 What wonder if his being thus became
 Sublime and comprehensive ! Low desires,
 Low thoughts had there no place ; yet was his heart
 Lowly ; for he was meek in gratitude,
 Oft as he called those ecstasies to mind,
 And whence they flowed ; and from them he acquired
 Wisdom, which works through patience ; thence he learned,
 In oft recurring hours of sober thought,
 To look on nature with a humble heart,
 Self-questioned where it did not understand,
 And with a superstitious eye of love.”

People say that, of all poets, Byron alone has fitly sung
 the sea. Let us recite the celebrated close of *Childe
 Harold*.

“ Oh ! that the desert were my dwelling-place,
 With one fair Spirit for my minister,
 That I might all forget the human race
 And, hating no one, love but only her !
 Ye elements !—in whose ennobling stir
 I feel myself exalted—Can ye not
 Accord me such a being ? Do I err
 In deeming such inhabit many a spot ?
 Though with them to converse can rarely be our lot.

“ There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
 There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
 There is society where none intrudes,
 By the deep sea, and music in its roar ;
 I love not man the less, but nature more,
 From these our interviews, in which I steal
 From all I may be, or have been of yore,
 To mingle with the universe, and feel
 What I can ne’er express, yet cannot all conceal.

“ Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean—roll !
 Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain ;
 Man marks the earth with ruin—his control

Stops with the shore;—upon the watery plain
The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain
A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,
When, for a moment, like a drop of rain,
He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan,
Without a grave, unknell'd, uncoffin'd, and unknown.

“ His steps are not upon thy paths,—thy fields
Are not a spoil for him,—thou dost arise
And shake him from thee; the vile strength he wields
For earth's destruction thou dost all despise,
Spurning him from thy bosom to the skies,
And send'st him shivering in thy playful spray
And howling, to his Gods, where haply lies
His petty hope in some near port or bay,
And dashest him again to earth:—there let him lay.

“ The armaments which thunderstrike the walls
Of rock-built cities, bidding nations quake,
And monarchs tremble in their capitals,
The oak leviathans, whose huge ribs make
Their clay creator the vain title take
Of lord of thee, and arbiter of war;
These are thy toys, and, as the snowy flake,
They melt into thy yest of waves, which mar
Alike the Armada's pride, or spoils of Trafalgar.

“ Thy shores are empires, changed in all save thee—
Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage, what are they?
Thy waters wasted them while they were free,
And many a tyrant since; their shores obey
The stranger, slave, or savage; their decay
Has dried up realms to deserts:—not so thou,
Unchangeable save to thy wild waves' play—
Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow—
Such as creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now.

“ Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form
Classes itself in tempests; in all time,
Calm or convulsed—in breeze, or gale, or storm,
Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime
Dark-heaving;—boundless, endless, and sublime—
The image of Eternity—the throne
Of the Invisible; even from out thy slime

The monsters of the deep are made ; each zone
Obeys thee ; thou goest forth, dread, fathomless alone,

“ And I have loved thee, Ocean ! and my joy
Of youthful sports was on thy breast to be
Borne, like thy bubbles, onward : from a boy
I wanton'd with thy breakers—they to me
Were a delight ; and if the freshening sea
Made them a terror—'twas a pleasing fear,
For I was as it were a child of thee,
And trusted to thy billows far and near,
And laid my hand upon thy mane—as I do here.”

What connexion of thought or feeling is there between the first and the second of these stanzas ? None. Nay, though manifestly supposed by the poet to be embued with one and the same spirit, they cut each other's throats. In the first he longs and prays for a friend of his soul—a female—to sip with him in the desert the goblet of delight ; in the second he declares there is no happiness like that of mingling with the universe.

“ With one fair spirit for my minister.”

It would seem she were not to be human, for with her he yearns to live, that “ he might forget all the human race.” Yet while fancying such an one as he desires, he asks

“ Do I err
In deeming *such inhabit many a spot*,
Though with them to converse *can rarely be our lot* ?”

He asks the elements if they can accord him such a being—the elements “ in whose ennobling stir he feels himself exalted”—though we see no high exaltation in such an apostrophe—and we shall believe, therefore, that “ the one fair spirit” is a child of their own—but in what is to lie her ministry ? Will her sex protect her ? Why has the fair spirit sex ? Is he too to be a spirit in the desert ? Ah ! no. A man. So it is only a new version of the old story—the impassioned poet is still flesh and blood—and the child of the elements, aerial as she seems, or of illu-

mined tears, or lambent fire that burns not, will be found after all to have a taint of earth.

Setting aside its inconsistency with what precedes it, there is not in the second stanza much power either of thought or expression.

*"There is society where none intrudes,
By the deep sea, and music in its roar,"*

is the repetition, for the tenth or twentieth time in the poem, of a sentiment that pleased Cicero, Plutarch, Bacon, and many other wise men, and must therefore be a natural and pleasing one; but here it reminds one of Paul Pry. "And music in its roar" is an irrelevant and impertinent fact. "From these our interviews" is far from poetical—and it is paying nature but a poor compliment to say "I love her the more." "To mingle with the universe" we have had rather too often—it is strong, but far from original; and never was there such an impotent conclusion as

"and feel
What I can ne'er express, *yet cannot all conceal!*"

But what think ye, mountains, of the address to the ocean? What! not one among you that has got the courage to speak out? You all look as if ye were deaf and dumb. Clap your hands then, in sign of praise—and thou with the coronet of clouds, unking thyself in homage to the great poet of the sea.

Not a word will one of them utter—'tis their siesta—and every mother's son of them is asleep. Like horses they seldom lie down, and prefer to dream on their feet. But we must awaken them—HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA!—Well, it was worth while coming here, all the way from Auld Reekie, for sake of that circular series of echoes. Another yet—like the smothered laughter of a fairy, far far away, hiding herself in a hillock—so sweet and wild it was—so musical with the voice of some mysterious kind of life!

If Cruachan will not criticise, Christopher must—and

what then, we ask ourselves, and you most attentive audience of clouds, who, judging from the enlightened gloom on your faces, have made up your minds to follow our lecture with thunders of applause—what then, thou beautiful but broken sky who look'st somewhat restless and as if thou was't given to change—what then, O sun, who hast such an eye for nature—and what, oh nature, who lovest all things and hast them given thee into thy holy keeping—what then, we ask you, do you think of the poetry you have been listening to from our lips—is it worthy or not of Byron and of the sea?

Why, this silence is mortifying—and looks as if mountains, clouds, sky, sun, and nature were unaware of our very existence. We begin now to believe that there is no material world. *'Tis all my eye.* Notwithstanding, we ARE—and shall therefore continue to take his lordship into our own hands, and trouble him with a few remarks. He prayed to be the “spirit of each spot”—who knows but that his prayer has been granted, and that he may not be now at our elbow.

Let us clear our voice. Hem! hem! hem!—The one, great, leading, pervading, prevalent idea of the Address is—is it not—that of man's impotence on the ocean contrasted with his power on the earth? On the earth his will triumphs and he is a king—on the ocean it is nought—and he is a slave.

Good. 'Tis a one-sided view of the question—but justifiable in an Address. And as the simpler the subject is, the easier too—and if powerfully handled, the grander—we demand the perfection of words. A great poet in a great mood undertakes a great theme, and in the light and gloom, the calm and storm of a great idea to show it to the world that her heart may quake. He must speak like a man when he is likest an angel.

“Roll on, thou deep and dark-blue ocean, roll!”

is spirited and sonorous—and that is well—but it is nothing more—and the initial line should have been a nobler burst. “Deep and dark-blue” are epithets that can neither be much praised nor blamed—to our mind they had been

better away—for the images they suggest, if not in dissonance, are not in consonance with the thoughts that follow them—and seem not to suggest them—but to stand by themselves as idle images—or rather forms of speech.

“Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee *in vain*.”

In vain? That is—without injuring thee? But they were not seeking to do so—nor can imagination conceive how they could—and if that be not the poet's meaning, what is it? Ten thousand fleets sweeping over the deep dark-blue ocean it may not be easy to picture to oneself—but he who can, will have glorious conceptions of the power of man on the amplitude of the sea. The poet's meaning now becomes less obscure—and he says well, “man marks the earth with ruin,” but not well “his control stops with the shore.” That is prosaic—and does not *tell*. How could he mark the sea with ruin? There is nothing there to ruin—and there can be no contrast.

“Upon the *watery plain* the wrecks are all thy deed.”

Call you that poetry? With the ocean personified before his own eyes, by his own soul, he yet speaks of his deeds “on the *watery plain*!” To a poet inspired that had been impossible—but “the vision and the faculty divine” were not with him—and he was merely inditing verses.

“Nor doth remain
A shadow of man's ravage *save his own*,”

is hard to scan, and full of confusion. To extricate any meaning from the words you must alter them, but 'tis hardly worth the pains. You frown—tell us then what you understand by “shadow of man's ravage save his own?”

“Like a drop of rain
He sinks into thy depths,”

to please you, we shall say is good—though we hardly think so—for wrecks on wrecks are shown to our ima-

gination, and thousands of creatures perish—"man" here means men—if not, how unimpassioned the tale of his doom—but "a drop of rain"—one single drop—was never yet seen by itself sinking into the depths of the sea—and further, be assured by us O neophyte! with Byron in thy breast, that "with bubbling groan" ought not to be there, for a drop of rain melts silently in a moment, and since it is said that "like a drop of rain he sinks," erase the words from your copy, and for rhyme have reason.

"Without a grave, unknell'd, uncoffin'd, and unknown."

What! do we find fault with that line? Yes—erase it. The poet is not singing a lament for sailors drowned at sea. He is singing the sea's wrath to man. The sea bids the ship go down—and down she goes—he wastes no thought on the crew—nor on their wives and sweet-hearts. What can it possibly be to him that they sink

"Without a grave, unknell'd, uncoffin'd, and unknown?"

But to cut the matter short—or to take the bull by the horns—the line as it stands, viewing it as an expression of human sympathy and sorrow in the poet's heart forgetting the sea in the sailors, is an ambitious failure. 'Tis a cold accumulation of melancholy circumstances which were all inevitable—of which the opposites were impossible—debarred by nature and fate. There is no pathos in it—"not a bit." It is absurd—it is ludicrous—yes—it makes us laugh—though, rather than laugh at misery, human or brute, we would choose to pass all our life in the Cave of Trophonius. "Without a grave"—who was to dig it? Show us sexton, spade, sod. As on the dry land no man ever yet was drowned—so at sea no man ever yet was buried but in the water—that is first—till the sea perhaps stamps him into the sand. Notwithstanding all that, all men speak of the sailor's grave—though, were they to ask themselves what they meant, they would probably answer—fish. "Uncoffined"—why the carpenter had other work during all this stormy *homebound* voyage than to get up coffins for the crew. The last thing he did

was to cut away her masts. But she was water-logged, and would not right—blew up without powder which by that time was mire—and then was sucked into the jaws of the Old One—like Jonah into the whale's belly. Uncoffined, indeed! Why the whole four hundred men were in blue jackets—most of them sober enough in all conscience—but not a few drunk as blazes—some capering about stark mad—and one delirious Jacky Tar dancing a hornpipe on the quarter-deck, maugre the remonstrances of the chaplain. “Unknelled”—who was to toll the bell? Davy Jones—and he did toll it—the ship's bell—a very Paganini ringing a full peal on its single self—and with most miraculous organ multiplying triple-bobs, and bob-majors—in mockery of the funeral—as if it were a marriage—and strange must it have been to the ears of the more tenacious of life and timber among the sinking crew to hear below all that booming, and above it the well-known music from the steeples in both towns—both Devonport and Plymouth—welcoming the old frigate safe back again to the quiet Tamar.

To return—

“His steps are not upon thy paths—thy fields
Are not a spoil for him.”

Why you said all that and more not two minutes ago. Had you tried it a third time, we do not doubt you might have still farther diluted it. But what means “his steps are not upon thy paths?” We fear it must be taken literally, and, in that case, it is poor stuff. Figuratively it is not true; for “his steps *are* upon thy paths,” while “ten thousand fleets sweep over thee.” The half-angry, half-scornful rising of the sea against the “vile strength man wields for earth's destruction” may pass for good—very fine to those who love falsettoes. But the stanza, as it grows inhuman, ceases to be English, and as it grows impious, ceases to be grammatical; and we ask forgiveness of all cockneys, alive or dead, whom we have ever calumniated, on the score of their sins having been out-sinned till they appear to be “frailties that lean to virtue's side,” by

“Thou dashest him to earth—*there let him LAY!*!”

Then follow some strong lines about the armaments, which you are at liberty to admire as much as you please, especially

“And monarchs tremble in their capitals;”

but pray take notice that they but set in a somewhat different point of view what was said in the preceding stanza about the sea's disposing of “the vile strength he wields for earth's destruction.”

“These are thy toys, and as the snowy flake,
They melt into thy yest of waves,”

is mere repetition. “A drop of rain” and “the snowy flake” is but the same image; and “*jest of waves*” is no improvement on Shakspeare's “*jesty waves*,” “*THAT SWALLOW NAVIGATION UP*”—Heaven! earth! and sea! what an awful expression!

The stanza about Assyria, Greece, Rome, and Carthage reads grandly at first sight—and grand let it be; but pray do you distinctly understand the meaning of

“*Thy waters wasted them while they were free?*”

To our ear the words have no meaning at all—nor have these so much as the writer thought—

“Their decay
Has dried up realms to deserts.”

“Those empires have decayed”—that is all that is really said—and 'tis enough. “Not so thou!” on which the whole hangs, is unsubstantial—and therefore the whole sinks into nothing. Earth's empires have fallen, and the poet laments or rejoices over their fall. But there was no empires on the sea to fall—nothing but winds and waves. Where, then, the contrast? Nowhere. As well might he have turned to Zahara—and, because the Great Desert remains unchanged, have glorified it above Babylon.

"Time writes no wrinkles on thy azure brow"

is a conceit, and a most impertinent one.

"Such as creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now"

is false—for *here are shells*.

Let us be reverent, for now the poet speaks of God.

"Thou glorious mirror, where th' *Almighty's form*
Glasses itself in tempests."

We fear the transition is violent from all that death and destruction to this physico-theological view of the ocean as a mirror of Deity; and we can have no reluctance in saying that these words are rash, and will not bear reflection. Intellect comprehends them not—Imagination disowns them—they are *rant*—perhaps *cant*; and all that follows, to "dark heaving" inclusive, is full of noise—not fury—"signifying nothing." "Boundless, endless, and sublime" is laboured writing, and fails to make us see in the ocean "the image of eternity"—of such eternity as is meant here—nor reconciles us to its being called "the throne of the invisible."

"Lo! the poor Indian, whose untutor'd mind
Sees God in clouds, and hears him in the wind,"

are far finer and more philosophical lines than those; and that the poet felt not nor knew the meaning of his own awful words proved by the ignorant atheism of

"even from thy slime
The monsters of the deep are made"—

an assertion, in the sense it has here, that would have excited the pity of Cuvier. It slips sillyly in, too, between lines with which it has no connexion, being immediately preceded by "the throne of the invisible," and immediately followed by

"each zone
Obeys thee; thou goest forth, dread, fathomless, alone"—

all of which epithets might have been spared, as all they denote had been expressed before, and they are rolled off for the sake of sound, not sense, though, after all, the music of the close is not magnificent.

The concluding stanza seems to be a general favourite, and is often quoted—nor is it uninteresting as characteristic of the poet's youth. But it comes worse than awkwardly upon the heels of its predecessor, and is but poorly written; nor could we ever see the grandeur of "and laid my hand upon thy mane," though we never could fail to see the absurdity of "*as I do here*," his lordship being at the moment on shipboard, whereas in his "joy of youthful sports" we presume he was swimming—occasionally on his back—and, we are willing to believe, "borne like thy bubbles onward" fairly out of his depth, and without bladders.

"Verbal criticism," quotha! What! do you at this time of day dare to tell us that great poets need care nothing about their language, that in its inspiration genius vents its ecstasies in impassioned words which it is impious to criticise, and which it is at once our duty and our delight to accept as they fall from the lips of an oracle. Bah!

And they have refused to admit thy bust into Westminster Abbey! Alas, poor Byron! has it come to that at last! *Vanitas vanitatum!* All is vanity. And why such exclusion? Because one of the greatest of England's poets reviled the Christian faith, and believed not in the immortality of the soul. Therefore, after death, there must not be set up in that house of fame, which is a religious temple, an image of the scoffer. We heard one with a loud voice cry—where there was none to answer him—"This world knows nothing of what Byron thought about the next—the friends with whom he walked here knew not if he believed in a hereafter—the great poet, perhaps had not made up his mind on the subject,—it matters not—up with him beside Milton."

Where's the sun? We know not in what air to look for him, for we take it that we have been lying under this rock in a reverie for some hours, and who knows but it may now be afternoon. It is almost dark enough

for evening—and if it be not far on in the day, then we shall have thunder. One o'clock. Usually the brightest hour of all the twelve—but any thing but bright at this moment—can there be an eclipse going on—an earthquake at his toilette—or merely a brewing of storm? Let us consult our almanac. No eclipse set down for to-day—the old earthquake dwells in the neighbourhood of Comrie, and has never been known to journey thus far north—besides he has for some years been bed-ridden; argal there is about to be a storm. What a fool of a land-tortoise were we to crawl up to the top of a mountain when we might have taken our choice of half-a-dozen glens with cottages in them every other mile, and a village at the end of each with a comfortable change-house! And up which of its sides was it that we crawled? Not this one—for it is as steep as a church—and we never in our life peeped over the brink of an uglier abyss. Ay, Mister Merlin, 'tis wise of you to be flying home into your crevice—put your head below your wing, and do cease that cry. Croak! croak! croak! Where is the sooty sinner? We hear he is on the wing—but he either sees or smells us, probably both, and the horrid gurgle in his throat is choked by some cloud. Surely that was the sughing of wings! A bird! alighting within fifty yards of us—and from his mode of folding his wings—an eagle! This is too much—within fifty yards of an eagle on his own mountain top. Is he blind? Age darkens even an eagle's eyes—but he is not old—for his plumage is perfect—and we see the glare of his far-keepers as he turns his head over his shoulder and regards his eyrie on the cliff. We would not shoot him for a thousand a-year for life. Not old—how do we know that? Because he is a creature who is young at a hundred—so says Audubon—and Swainson—and our brother James—and all shepherds. Little suspects he who is lying so near him with a long pole. Our snuffy suit is of a colour with the storm-stained granite—and if he walks this way he shall get a buffet. And he is walking this way—his head up, and his tail down—not hopping like a filthy raven—but one foot before the other—like a man—like a king. We do not altogether like it—

it is rather alarming—he may not be an eagle after all—but something worse—“Hurra! ye sky-scraper! Christopher is upon you! take that, and that, and that”—all one tumbling scream, there he goes over the edge of the cliff. Dashed to death—but impossible for us to get the body. Whew! dashed to death indeed! There he wheels, all on fire, round the thunder-gloom. Is it electric matter in the atmosphere—or fear and wrath that illumine his wings?

We wish we were safe down. There is no wind here yet—none to speak of—but there is wind enough, to all appearance, in the region towards the west. The main body of the clouds is falling back on the reserve—and observing that movement the right wing deploys—as for the left it is broken, and its retreat will soon be a flight. Fear is contagious—the whole army has fallen into irremediable disorder—has abandoned its commanding position—and in an hour will be self-driven into the sea. We call that a panic.

Glory be to the corps that covers the retreat. We see now the cause of that retrograde movement. In the northwest, “far off its coming shone,” and “in numbers without number numberless,” lo! the adverse host! Thrown out in front the beautiful rifle brigade comes fleetly on, extending in open order along the vast plain between the aerial pine-mountains to yon fire-cliffs. The enemy marches in masses—the space between the divisions now widening and now narrowing—and as sure as we are alive we hear the sound of trumpets. The routed army has rallied and reappears—and, hark, on the extreme left a cannonade. Never before had the Unholy Alliance a finer park of artillery—and now its fire opens from the great battery in the centre, and the hurly-burly is general, far and wide over the whole field of battle.

All this may be very fine—but these lead drops dancing on our hat tell us to take up our pole and be off, for that by and by the waters will be in flood, and we may have to pass a night on the mountain. Down we go.

We do not call this the same side of the mountain we crawled up? If we do, we lie. There, all was purple,

except what was green—and we were happy to be a heathered legged body, occasionally skipping like a grass-hopper on turf. Here, all rocks save stones. Yet out of the way, ye ptarmigans. We hate shingle from the bottom of our —— oh! dear! oh! dear! but *this* is painful—sliddering on shingle away down what is any thing but an inclined plane—feet foremost—accompanied with rattling debris—at railroad speed—every twenty yards or so dislodging a stone as big as oneself, who instantly joins the procession, and there they go hopping and jumping along with us, some before, some on each side, and we shudder to think of it, some behind—well somersettèd over our head thou Gray Wackè—but mercy on us, and forgive us our sins, for if this lasts, in another minute we are all at the bottom of that pond of pitch.

Here we are—sitting! How we are brought to assume this rather uneasy posture we do not pretend to say. We confine orselves to the fact. Sitting! beside a tarn. Our escape appears to have been little less than miraculous, and must have been mainly owing, under Providence, to our pole. Who's laughing? 'Tis you, you old witch, in hood and cloak, crouching on the cliff, as if you were warming your hands at the fire. Hold your tongue—and you may sit there to all eternity if you choose—you cloud-ridden hag! No—there will be a blow-up some day—as there evidently has been here before now—but no more geology—from the tarn, who is a tarnation deep 'un, runs a rill, and he offers to be our guide down to the low country.

Why, this does not look like the same day. No gloom here—but a green serenity—not so poetical perhaps, but, in a human light, far preferable to a “brown horror.” No sulphurous smell—“the air is balm.” No sultriness—how cool the circulating medium! In our youth, when we had wings on our feet—and were a feathered Mercury—cherub we never were nor cauliflower—by flying in our weather-wisdom, from glen to glen, when we have made one day a whole week—with, at the end, a Sabbath. For all over the really *mountainous* region of the Highlands, every glen has its own indescribable kind of day—all vaguely comprehended under the one day that may

happen to be uppermost—and lowland meteorologists, meeting in the evening after a long absence—having, perhaps, parted that morning—on comparing notes lose their temper, and have been even known to proceed to extremities in defence of facts well-established of a most contradictory and irreconcilable nature.

Here is an angler fishing with the fly. In the glen beyond that range he would have used the minnow—and in the huge hollow behind our friends to the southeast, he might just as well try the bare hook—though it is not universally true that trouts don't rise when there is thunder. Let us see how he throws. What a cable! Flies! Tufts of heather. Hollo, you there; friend, what sport? What sport, we say? No answer; are you deaf? Dumb? He flourishes his flail and is mute. Let us try what a whack on the back may elicit. Down he flings it, and staring on us with a pair of most extraordinary eyes, and a beard like a goat, is off like a shot. Alas! we have frightened the wretch out of his few poor wits, and he may kill himself among the rocks. He is indeed an idiot—deaf and dumb. We remember seeing him near this very spot forty years ago—and he was not young then—they often live to extreme old age. No wonder, he was terrified—for we are duly sensible of the *outrè tout ensemble* we must have suddenly exhibited in the glimmer that visits those weak red eyes—he is an albino. That whack was rash, to say the least of it—our pole was too much for him—but we hear him whining—and moaning—and, good God! there he is on his knees with hands clasped in supplication—“dinna kill me—dinna kill me—’am silly—’am silly—and folk say ’am auld—auld—auld.”

The harmless creature is convinced we are not going to kill him—takes from our hand what he calls his fishing-rod and tackle—and laughs like an owl. “Ony meat—ony meat—ony meat?” “Yes, innocent, there is some meat in this wallet, and you and I shall have our dinner.” “Ho! ho! ho! a smelled, a smelled! A can say the Lord’s prayer.” “What’s your name, my man?” “Daft Dooggy the Haveril.” “Sit down, Dugald.”

A sad mystery all this—a few drops of water on the

brain will do it—so wise physicians say, and we believe it. For all that, the brain is not the soul. He takes the food with a kind of howl,—and carries it away to some distance, muttering “a aye eats by mysel!” He is saying grace! And now he is eating like an animal. ’Tis a saying of old, “Their lives are hidden with God!”

We leave the harmless—not unhappy wretch—and refreshed by the fowl, pursue our journey down the glen. There ought to be a kirk not far off, but, perhaps, it has been pulled down—yet we hope not—let kirks that need repairing be repaired—but ’tis a sin to pull one down—at all events let the new be always built on the old foundations. There it is—and the plane-trees. Why should we know it again even to the very size of the slates! They are the same slates—their colour is the same—the roof neither more nor less weather-stained than it was forty years ago.

After a time old buildings undergo no perceptible change—any more than old trees. And when they have begun to feel the touch of decay, it is long before they look melancholy—while they still continue to be used, they cannot help looking cheerful—and even dilapidation itself is painful only when felt to be lifeless!

But there we three sat on the churchyard wall! The wittiest of the witty—the wildest of the wild—the brightest of the bright—and the boldest of the bold—he was, within a month, drowned at sea. How genius shone o’er thy fine features, yet how pale thou ever wast! thou who satst then by the sailor’s side, and listened to his sallies with a mournful smile—friend! dearest to our soul! loving us far better than we deserved; for though faultless thou, yet tolerant of all our frailties—and in those days of hope from thy lips how elevating was praise! Yet seldom do we think of thee! For months—years—not at all—not once—sometimes not even when by some chance we hear your name—it meets our eyes written on books that once belonged to you and that you gave us—and of you it recalls no image. Yet we sank down to the floor on hearing thou wast dead—ungrateful to thy memory for many years we were not—but it

faded away till we forgot thee utterly, and we have never visited thy grave!

It would seem that many men *desire* to doubt the immortality of the soul. Why—why? Argue the question as low as you choose—yet you cannot be brought to a conviction of its mortality. Let the natural persuasion of a man's mind be that in this world he perishes, then this world is all to him, his reason gives him over to sense and passion. Let the persuasion, the hope, the mere desire of his mind be to the belief in worlds of future life, and all his higher mind becomes moral together. We are not to conceive of it merely as a belief to be deliberately, and with calculation, acted upon; but as a belief infusing itself into all our thoughts and feelings. How different are my affections if they are towards flowers, which the blast of death will wither, or towards spirits which are but beginning to live in my sight, but are gathering good and evil here, for a life I cannot measure. We urge the morality of the question not as if we spoke to men who held vice to be their interest, and who are to be dragged back from it by violence; but to men as beings holding virtue to be their highest interest, but feeling how weak their nobler moods are against the force of their passions, and wishing for every assistance to the pursuit of their higher destination. To those who wish to feel their nature rise, not to feel it sink, this belief, in any degree in which they can find reason to embrace it, is an immense blessing. In all morality the disposition to believe is half the belief, and the strong inducements of opinion, to all good men, arise out of their own life. It is much to be able to say to the sceptic, "The great reason of your disbelief is not the force of the arguments on which you seem to yourself to rest your convictions, but the inaptitude of your mind for a better belief; and that inaptitude arises from habits and states of mind, which, when they are distinctly exposed to you, you yourself acknowledge to be condemnable." Take first out of the mind every thing that is an actual obstruction to the belief—obtain perfect suspense—and let then the arguments weigh. Surely, if morality means

any thing, it is much to say in favour of any belief, that the state of morality necessarily produces it.

Singular that we have not heard a shot the whole day. The duke must have given them a jubilee. But we have traversed the dominions of more dukes than one—since seven in the morning—it is now, we should say, seven in the evening—yet not a single sportsman have we seen. Birds enough—along our pole we occasionally took a vizy at an old cock—and our wallet would have been crammed had it all the pouts we covered—but we have had the day and the desert all to ourselves—and only once imagined—but did not mention it—that we saw a deer. Not a human being, indeed, of any sort, but poor Dugald, has crossed our way—so not a soul had we to talk to but our own shadow. On some occasions it was not easy to look at him without laughing—leaping side by side with us on his pole—in a style beyond the grotesque—sometimes suddenly shrinking into a droich of a broad-backed bandy—and then as suddenly dwindling himself out into a daddy-long-legs, striding as if he had discovered the longitude. You may not believe it, but we saw him on the top of a mountain, when we were walking in the glen. How he got there it is not for us to say—but there he was—and he took his stance with such an air of independence, that it was some time before we could believe our eyes that it was him—but our suspicions having been awakened by a Lord Burleigh shake of the head—an unconscious practice of ours—as we believe on the authority of friends who have seen us in earnest conversation with ourselves—we detected him by waving our hat round our head—when, taken off his guard and relapsing into his servitude, the magnanimous hero performed the same evolution with a dexterity equal to any inhabitant of the Brocken.

There is a disturbance! Bang they go, barrel after barrel, to the tune of ten or twenty—and then what a burst of bagpipes! A shooting-lodge so near the old kirk! And pray why not? We hope it is a shooting-lodge—or, at any rate, a tent.

A tent—and of the most magnificent description—fit to hold a troop. We like to see things done in style—

and this is bang up to the mark. Ay—there he is—in his native dress—his name—

“ Well do we know, but may not tell ;”

but 'tis that of a warlike clan—and he is their chieftain. Those noble-looking men around him are Southrons—they have too much fine sense to mount the tartan—and we think we see one on whom Victoria is thought to have looked sweet at her coronation.

“ Our honoured Mr. North, have you dropt from heaven in among us ?” “ We have.” “ How did you travel, our dear Christopher ?” “ In a balloon.” “ Where's your ballast—our beloved Kit ?” “ On our back.” “ God bless you—are you well ?” “ Toll-loll.” “ You must stay with us a week ?” “ Two.” “ Give us your hand on that ?” “ Both.” “ You have not dined ?” “ No.” “ Stir your stumps, ye villains—and let the tables be spread for ‘ OUR GUIDE, PHILOSOPHER, AND FRIEND.’ ”

FUNERALS.

“Hic niger est—hunc tu Romane caveto.”—Hor.

(Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, 1838.)

“UPON my honour, sir, my father does not get more than 40 per cent!” This conscientious and genteel speech haunted me not very long since, during a painful and dangerous illness. It came certainly very *mal a-propos*; but having come, would not depart, like an imp of evil, as it was—for some one has observed, or, if not, some one *might* have observed, that words once embodied in sense or sentence have a living existence, the good or bad spirits taking conception in the mind, and birth from the mouth, never to return again, but invisible agents in the world, that do a world of mischief in it, and often standing in a court of justice against their parents in the flesh—such as imp of evil, I assert, was that sentence to me, for, having taken possession of the best room in the house of my brains, it kicked its heels there, and called about it lustily, and innumerable were the train of thought-imps that came at its call. “Upon my honour, sir, my father does not get more than 40 per cent.” Who gave it existence? It was the son of an undertaker, my dear Eusebius. The occasion this:—I was present when the said very genteel youth presented the bill for a funeral, a few weeks after my acquaintance had buried his father. I am sure the old gentleman never would have *slept* with *his* fathers, could he have read over the items of his last journey, and would have again died over the sum-total. The bill was indeed startling. It was upon a slight remonstrance that this nicely dressed mincing son of his father, in about the nineteenth year of his age, and full

promise of his trade of hatbands and scarfs, laid his hand upon the left side of his waistcoat, and unhesitatingly swore like any peer of Parliament—"Upon my honour, sir, my father does not get above 40 per cent!!" Years have passed away since I heard this sentence, nor have I thought of it in the interim; but that it should just then, above all times, when I lay in a feverish state, and when it appears by no means improbable that an inquest of "40 per cents" might be called to sit upon my body, was a remarkable proof of a fiendish existence of words that, like vultures, come to the wreck. From that day I know an undertaker by instinct, and abhor him, as dogs in China fly from a butcher. Long days and nights did I lie upon my uneasy bed; and this son of an undertaker was at the foot or head of it continually. At one time he brought me a list of friends and relatives to attend my funeral, most of whom I thoroughly disliked; at another time he laid out the scarfs, and hatbands, and gloves upon my bed, and changed my curtains into black cloaks. At another time he presented me with a book of patterns of nicely drawn coffins, and coffin-ornaments, tin-lacquered cherubims, with wings, cloud, and trumpet. Then stepped out of the room, and came in again with a stone-cutter, and his book of monuments and tablets—and then I racked my brain for inscriptions, and he suggested many, so abominable, that I was quite angry. Then the discussions upon the relative merits of stone and marble, the cost of cutting per letter; the clergyman's fee, the clerk's, the sexton's—if all were to have silk hatbands? the charges for pumping the grave dry. But the worst was when I felt that *I was in* my coffin, and yet knew all that was going on in the room about me, just the same as if I had been purposely gifted with the faculties of mesmerism—only I was conscious of sense of suffocation. Under this new magnetism I *saw* them carry me out of the room, the ever polite son of an undertaker pointing the way. I felt the shock as they knocked against a bureau (of which, by the by, I told them to take care), in which I had many treasures—alas! thought I—farewell! never to see them again. I very distinctly saw a near relative, to whom I had left, for me and for

him, too, a handsome legacy, smile with more hilarity than was becoming the peculiar situation, and I believed he inwardly thought he should rummage my bureau. I would call to them to stop—I wished to alter my will—but no utterance came to my wishes. “This then,” says I, “is being dead in law.”—“I am infant—oh! the rogues!—they will ransack all—I shall have nothing.”—“You shall have the bill,” looked the son of an undertaker, and “upon my honour, my father does not get more than 40 per cent.” Extortion! miscreant!—“Lift the poor gentleman cautiously over the banisters, and don’t hurt the wall for the next comer,” muttered an oily-faced fellow in damp black, the smell of which was awfully suffocating. I saw and smelt through the boards that covered me. Bang they went against the staircase wall, and they staggered under me. “Well done, Old Scratch,” cried another. I was horrified—was *he* one of my bearers? We passed the door of the room where my “mourning friends” were assembled. It was open. Who would believe it? they were in jocund conversation. My surgeon, whom I had considered the tenderest and most humane of beings, was facetious with the parson; how they, too, were “true” sportsmen—always in at the death! There was some confusion in the hall. The great door was open. I saw the two mutes, the horses of a part of the body of the hearse, and heard the wheels of the mourning coaches behind. “Go on,” says one. “We can’t,” says another. “Lawyer Codicil isn’t come yet,” said another.—“I sent him hatband and gloves,” said the son of an undertaker, “and a coach at his door.”—“Coach is returned,” said another; “he can’t come, he says, but will be here *after* the funeral to read the will.”—“Oh, he will, will he,” thought I; but I couldn’t jump out of the coffin, though I tried. “He will take the will for the deed,” said I; “I never will employ Lawyer Codicil again.”—There are no lawyers where you are going, a something suggested to me: and do you forget you are dead? you are going to be buried.—“Go on,” said the son of an undertaker. Out came the procession in cloaks, and he was ranging them in order, two and two. I saw the paraphernalia, hatbands, &c. blown by

the wind as we got out of doors, but I couldn't feel a breath of it. I have no breath in my body, thought I, and therefore the air will have no sympathy with me; I shall never feel it again. Then all the men about me looked the most solid substances I ever beheld; they had been all the morning real beef-eaters. They shoved me into the hearse. I was sensible of the first slow motion—then that I was *quite* dead—in fact, I fell fast asleep; and when I awoke they told me I was better—and the good surgeon was feeling my pulse, and did look jocund, and I forgave him. But it was some time before I could reconcile myself to the sight of my relatives, who had put on a hilarious look as they struck against my bureau. Though I knew perfectly that I was then alive, I had at first a confused notion as if I were two persons, one dead and one alive; then that I the living and I the dead were at issue and had a lawsuit, and that I the living had a decision of the Court of Chancery in my favour—that my dead self was outlawed for contempt of court, and that the court below had issued an “habeas corpus” against him. He was condemned in costs. The surgeon was plainly metamorphosed before my face into Lawyer Codicil. I insisted upon discharging his bill; he told his clerk to make it out; and then behind him, with his pen in his hand, I saw the aforesaid son of an undertaker, who asked him if he should tack on more than “forty per cent.”

I will not attempt to run through an hundredth part of the detail of the wanderings of these two miserable days and nights, scenes various in character, but in all of which, in one shape or other, this forty per centage was my persecutor. But, while I am on the subject of this mental delusion during illness, I will just mention two dreams, the effects of laudanum, which I do not recollect that I had ever taken before.

It is utterly inconceivable to one awake and (as he trusts) in his senses how such an idea could even enter into a sick brain. I thought my head was a forest; that there was a *ballue* in it; there were plenty of birds and of sportsmen; shots were fired, and a brace of partridges fell right through my eyes to my feet. The shots were suggested only by the slamming of a door.

The other dream was more painful. To understand which it must be told that I had suffered under acute inflammation, and it had been found necessary to apply a mustard-plaster. And here I cannot but remember my own simplicity, for when my medical friend, good creature—and he was really my friend, and I ought to be thankful to him that I am able to write this—when, I say, he told me that I might keep on the said mustard-plaster, if I pleased, till I saw him next day, I, who had enjoyed such good health that I never had had such a thing in my life, and knew not what a mustard-plaster was, said, in the innocence of my heart, that, to oblige him, I would keep it on for a week if he wished it. But, oh! tortures, all that ever were or will be, are centered in that thing called a mustard-plaster! One hour was torture beyond description. Whether it was that it was upon the tender and afflicted part, or that my constitution has a particular antipathy to such “ticklers,” as my worthy friend called them, I know not; but never did I ever feel such torment as that gave me—ay, for a day and a half at least, after it was off. Now, after this pleasant little episode of the mustard conflagration, the scenes, the remembrance of which makes the horrors of Milton and Dante tame, let us pass on to my second dream. I thought I was lying on a sofa. A servant entered, and announced that a woman wished to see me. I desired her to be shown up, supposing it to be some parochial affair. With this idea, the furniture of my room was gone, all but the sofa, and I was in an up-stair room of the miserable old parish poor-house. I arose to receive the woman, whose steps I heard upon the stairs. She entered, and we met in the middle of the room. She was dressed in an old black bonnet and red cloak, a gaunt haggard creature whom I had never seen before. She instantly caught hold of me, and wrestled with me, and as I was very weak, threw me on the floor. Then I beheld such a change come over her. She threw off her cloak and her bonnet, and was instantly no longer the woman—but my friend O——, my amiable friend O——, and how altered! His features assumed the most terrific aspect of rage, and his hair stood on end with fury, and his gesture was violent in the extreme. Now

my worthy friend has a wooden leg. He gave a violent turn with his whole body, and jumped upon me, prostrate as I was on the floor, and with the end of his wooden leg pegged upon the very spot where I had had the mustard-plaster; he gave a wonderful pirouette upon me, laughing and grinning; and continued the action, with repeated jumps, which put me in agony; he spun like a top. Such torture could not last long, and so I awoke. And here ends my experience of laudanum. I very soon recovered from my illness, of which, my dear Eusebius, I send you these particulars, as you have expressed much anxiety on my account. I shall not soon forget my friend "Forty per cent"—and am so thoroughly impressed with a sense of funeral follies and funeral rogueries, that one object of this letter is to entreat you, my dear Eusebius, to see, when my day shall come, that I be quietly and unostentatiously laid in the ground. I would return to it as a child, wearied with his trifling sports, to his mother's breast. I care not, with how little cost; it is not my desire to enrich an undertaker by my death. And I beg you will signify to my nearest relatives that for my part of the show I willingly dispense with all their outward marks of sorrow—and that if they choose to put themselves and families into black, that they will do so to gratify themselves, and not to honour me. I have made calculations of what, according to the usual routine of these matters, my decease would cost my family, and find that the law and the undertaker might be considered as in part my heirs, which I by no means intend, and would provide against.

People may complain of the expense of living, when in reality they have more cause to complain, if they had any forethought, of the expense of dying. In fact death is treated as a crime, and subjects us both to "pains and penalties." Her majesty loses a subject—so there must be a fine, without a recovery. Come into this world how we may, we are greatly taxed for the luxury of leaving it. We let the government tax us high enough, but that we let the undertakers tax us besides, is certainly a wonderful folly. There are situations of distress, when a man can neither afford to live nor to die; and is haunted in his

ailments by visions of the harpies that will come to defile, or to consume his substance. What pretence can there be but our own easy sufferance for the abominable death-law, armed with probate duty and legacy tax, ever on the watch for spoliation? A man lies weak, helpless, incapable of exercising his industry and providing further means for his family—and because he is in this weak condition, you take away from him a portion of his former industry—when he wants it all, and more. You, in fact, accost him pretty much as the thief did the unfortunate man, who was quite out of breath, and could not move a step further, having pursued another man who had run away with his hat—"What," said the new come thief, "can't you stir a step further?" "Not a step," said the robbed. "Not one?" said the other,—“then hang it, I'll have your wig.” The law in this respect, is in fact a real Fury, with a power of ubiquity and self-multiplication, and is up to every man's bedside at his appointed hour, if he have any thing *worth* having; and because he can run his course no longer, boldly breaks open his strong-box, takes Fury's portion, and meeting the undertaker on the stairs, bids him walk up and help himself. Law has a strong arm—if the strong and vigorous can scarcely resist it, how shall the weak?—so we put up with the evil, and that we may be used to it, and, like the eels, the better bear the skinning, we cannot have an almanac to tell us the weather, but it shall contain tables to refresh our memories, and tell us that we are mortal, and what is the cost of mortality. But, my dear Eusebius, why may we not make a strong fight against the undertakers? Let any and all men get their bread by an honest calling. Live, and let live, should be every man's motto; but it is not theirs. They are, therefore, out of the pale of humanity. They won't let live, but live upon our dying. They do not comfort the "widows and afflicted," but vastly swell the amount of their sorrow. They come into the house like commissioners of Death's Parliament, and with their retinue eat up and drink up all in it, before they that should have a share of it have been dead a week. And then the damaged and rotten goods they distribute to the mourners at the highest prices, knowing very well

the matter will never be noticed, and in many instances their taking even these back again at less than a quarter the cost, so that a hatband or gloves may be sold at full cost twenty times, and taken back for a trifle as many!! Really, when we come to consider the matter fairly, if my friend "Forty per cent" spoke truth, he had a conscience, for very many get five hundred per cent. Then their humility and look of consideration before the bereaved so disarms suspicion; they acquire a look of such universal and particular sympathy that their official duties have an air of benevolence in the doing. Their accounts are sure to be sent in in a decent time; that is, when it would be a pain to look into them, when the feelings are too tender to discuss or dispute any of the items—for in grief we think of nothing but grief, and are generous, or careless—and who would bear the shame and reproach of being supposed niggard, and repentant of the cost bestowed on affection, and hopes buried in the grave?

And, do you know, Eusebius, that in cities and populous towns there is too often an under traffic between them and the parochial clergy, so that the items *charged* are never sent; a regular cash account being kept between them, to the profit, and as you will think, to the shame of both, the undertaker keeping to his own share a third, or even a half!! Though this is all very well understood, it is connivance notwithstanding; oh, Eusebius, were you one of the parochial ministers of a large city, what a nest of hornets would you have about your ears! You would pull the nose of the first that offered you the copartnership in the black business, and publish by advertisement the iniquity, and acquaint all widows, widowers, orphans, &c, that you had a stock of mourning items for general use, and would not trouble them. I confess I never see a town clergyman step out of his mourning chariot, in his many, many a time worn wrappings, for the wear of which the price of new is charged to the afflicted relative of the deceased, without feeling that he is lowered in my estimation, and that he is lending his name and profession to a petty fraud. But your conscientious undertakers are not satisfied with dressing up the relatives and friends—they must have attendants

and mourners of their own, all to be tricked out at a similar cost. An acquaintance of mine, of very moderate means, told me, not long ago, that he had in the last year two funerals in his family—and that, though he wished to be as moderate as might be, and yet avoid the talk and notoriety of flying in the face of a custom, mis-called decency, and though the distance to the place of burial did not exceed a mile, yet that the funeral expenses each time were between seventy and eighty pounds.

Now, Eusebius, one hundred and fifty or sixty pounds from his pockets and his children's, into the pocket of an undertaker, is a very absurd, and at the same time, a very lamentable thing. That sum, bestowed on the education of his children, might have made a very considerable difference in their views and situations of after life. How few, that know well in other respects to regulate their households and their business, have strength boldly to resist the custom, greatly aggravated by the whole trade of undertakers, and rather go on enduring the infliction of being knowingly imposed upon, and suffering in many cases a serious diminution of means, already too small, and often rendered smaller by altered circumstances, caused by the very death that brings the harpies upon his house. When I read in the newspapers, that in the last influenza in London, there was supposed to be not less than one thousand funerals in one Sunday, I could not help calculating the enormous sum distributed among the undertakers, and considering the expenditure a very serious aggravation of the family distresses brought about by that universal calamity. One thousand homeless, comfortless homes for one day's work of death in one city! What must have been the aggregate amount of devastation of the malady! Then to think that on the working day, the day following, came the business of life, with all its tumult of action, and that all that was then going on of death, and all that had gone on, was hidden from sight—it brought a sort of conviction that the vast population was walking over disguised pitfalls; that, let who would fall in, the rest were careless. A London churchyard is at any time, crowded as it is, a most forlorn place, so utterly abandoned by the living,

and as much as may be shut out from sight, as if we were ashamed of them, and compensated by a long neglect for the undertaker's *one* expensive parade. And who does not, while in life, encourage the idea of *resting* in the grave? but in these receptacles there can be, fancy assures us, no rest, night nor day. The incessant noise of carriages that pass them in their speed of pleasure or business; the full tide and roar of life, that never stops to remember one inhabitant of all the tombs, that ring with the chariot wheels of universal neglect, rattling on to the feast or show—and the dampness and the fog that settles on, or broods over them in the twilight of a November day, and the chill and rains of wintry nights, so sadly contrasted with the low debasing riot of life, and wickedness of lanes around them, all those seem to rob death of its repose, and even of its respect, and the grave-tenants of their respectability. No, Eusebius, I am weak enough to abhor such sepulture. If I must contemplate the outward scene of my last home—and how few are there that do not?—let it be where the grass grows not rank and black, amid the broken pots and pans, and refuse cast from decaying windows—but where the grass grows on which the sun shines, and a flower may spring up from the fresh earth, returning modest thanks as an offering, even from the dead, for the blessing of showers and dews of heaven—where, if there be pride, it shows not its offensive arrogant airs, but the aristocratic and humble monuments bears a family relation to each other, claiming clanship in death; where the daily frequented path yet keeps friendly fellowship with the living, and where graves are not unvisited; where graves look sensible of a Sabbath, and Sabbath care and villagers' talk—where the Sunday congregation, not hastening out with all speed, as from an odious place, love to linger; and there is homely courtesy, and better than every day thoughts put on with Sunday clothes. Where a friend, such as my Eusebius, may freely come and cheat his fancy, and give breathing to his affection, without having to seek sexton or beadle for key, and a permission to be paid for. Not too gay for sorrow, nor too sad for love; but where there may be an indwelling sanctity that may

hallow both; whence sorrow might receive comfort and love trust; where there is a sweet green shade for the tales of the young, and a lingering sunshine upon many a sod to rest the aged as they sit, not unthankful that beneath their feet is the same home that will receive them, as it has received their kindred before them. Such is a scene of peace. Here the living may hope to "sleep with their fathers." I love even the country churchyard epitaphs, their repetitions, their quaint rhymes, and misspellings. One can fancy that on moonlight nights, when the shadows connect grave with grave, and stone with stone by their distinct lines, that gentle spirits come out of them, and, linked together in groups, seeking amusement, their permitted hour in reading each other's histories, and humble praise. You know, Eusebius, I do not mock—there is no thought that is not in some sense a reality; and such an one, if it passes through the mind but a moment, awakens but a natural instinct, assuring us that even death is not all death. Somewhere the dead *are*, and I do not think we are the worse for bringing them nearest to ourselves. The country churchyard has, besides, another charm. It rarely witnesses the undertaker's pomp. They are mostly town ferrets—here, poor men are chiefly brought to their graves on poor men's shoulders; there is, in general, more decency than show, though the village carpenter will sometimes affect the undertaker; but it is in an humble way, and the consequences are not disastrous. There is a custom with country clubs that is not a bad one—every member, in case of death of wife or husband of any member, gives a shilling to the survivor. This does more than pay the funeral expenses, and as there is not, as yet, any very great ambition for display, it may be hoped that substantial comfort is offered by the custom—yes! substantial comfort, for it is a comfort that there may be a loaf, and somewhat more in the house, even after friends have broken bread, and temperately taken a parting draught, not taken without solemnity, and moral, and perhaps religious feeling. Bereavement is made worse by immediate deprivation of life's comforts. A little time is required for reconciliation to worse things, and this club aid is in

general very timely, and it does not go to the undertaker. The sleeping family of a country churchyard, as I remarked, are generally undisturbed by grandeur, seeking to mingle its bones with the humble—it does happen sometimes. I remember well a procession which came from a considerable distance, which, though the parties concerned in it were not themselves grand, being too much left to the taste, and ambition too, of the undertaker, was somewhat conspicuous. I bore a part in it as mourner—we were two days upon the road, and such two days! never shall I forget them. When we had left the town, it seemed as if all had thrown off even the semblance of sorrow. I was in the coach with the nearest relatives, who, very sensibly, endeavoured to make the journey as little dismal as might be, and succeeded; so that it was even pleasant. There was nothing to blame here; but the officials of the procession, the cavalcade, the undertaker, and his “merry-men all,” made holiday all the way. It was observable enough, that, as fiddlers, on entering a village, strike up a note or two to show their calling, so on such occasions did our friend the “forty per cent” marshal his men, and for a few moments affect professional solemnity; but it did not always succeed, the officials did not go quite the straight way they were marshalled; and at the inns at night, I very much suspect the corps was left to take care of itself; for “’twas merry in the hall.” And upon one occasion I remember the procession was stopped before we entered a town—the mutes were missing, and when found, they had been strangely and ludicrously metamorphosed. The mutes had been with the liquids, and there was confusion in their tongues. We arrived at length, by the help of pretty fast driving; when, not too near town and village, without being weary of our journey, we deposited the deceased in a country church vault. And I recollect thinking as I stood near the ceremony, and marked the stupid unconcern of the crowds that came to see the show, that it was a needless waste of money to bring thither with so much pomp one whom not one of the village population had known, or would ever acknowledge by any sympathy, to be flesh of their flesh, or bone

of their bone, no, nor even dust of their dust. And all this coldness and indecency, if I may so call it, was purchased at the cost of some hundreds of pounds, for the benefit of—the undertaker.

It is very evident that costly funerals have not, for their first object, respect for the dead. The pride of the living is more conspicuous in them. If, however, they were a solemn lesson to all men, if they were a public proclamation of death—a warning that all should take heed to their ways, it would be well. The burial-service is so; but it is precisely where the undertaker's work of parade commences that there is an interruption of the solemnity, which is not taken up again until the last deposit in the earth, when the friend and relation steal forward, and drop their tears into the grave, and the men of business keep in the background—often even then indecorously to pack up their trappings for another show. And there is always sure to be something ridiculous mixed up with their proceedings. In the last case it was strikingly so to even the would-be mourners; for *they* were not thought of, and the appearance of wo was discarded a mile out of town, the pace quickened, and the resumption of the farce occasionally, made the whole a mockery. The dresses assumed; the mutes; hired mourners; the known circumstance that they have never perhaps seen the deceased, nor care one farthing for him or her, and often they know not which; their sleek appearance, bodily; their enormous eating and drinking; their impatience to shuffle up their paraphernalia; all these things, which are, besides, most adverse to any sympathy with the real mourners, have in themselves much of the ridiculous. The mummery before our eyes leaves us no time to think of the defunct; and if we do, it is to picture him, not as death, but as the mummers have tricked him up. The mind's eye can with difficulty penetrate the plumed enclosure. The very idea of the trade of wo, that all is hired for the occasion, is revolting to better feeling. Now it is the absence of this hired sorrow, and the room that is left to the imagination of the spectator, by the dress and sword of the soldier upon his coffin, to personify the dead—to see him, at a glance, the

living and the dead—that makes a soldier's funeral exceedingly affecting. And here all that attend have been his companions, nor, is there any pantomime trickery of dress and gesture. These are the very arms he wore, he handled—the boots, their hability, their fitness to the individual, all that which made them his, and him theirs, is not yet departed. We see the man more awfully than if we actually saw him lying in his coffin. The value of the individual man is stamped by the official military attendance, and serves as an epitaph of merit. The costliest funeral of the highest son of earth has nothing so affecting.

There is much solemnity in funerals abroad, where the Church steps in at once, and takes possession of the deceased as under its protection, under the sanctity of its religious authority; and if it makes an exhibition, it is with authority,—and this proclamation has holiness in it. All that is not ecclesiastical is kept out of sight. There is nothing intermediate between the deceased and the church. The undertaker interferes not, intrudes not here to spoil all. Death, it is true, reigns for the hour, but religion triumphs. The church certifies the triumph, and the resurrection. I well remember, my dear Eusebius, how much I was once affected by an exhibition of this kind, on the very first night of my entering Rome. It was dark; a singularly impressive cry attracted my attention. I was led by the sound some distance, I knew not where, for I was totally unacquainted with the city. I found myself in a large and long street, at the further end of which I could see many torches, and heard a constant repetition of the cry. I waited leaning against a large pillar, until the procession should reach me. It did so, and passed in great order: first came the several religious orders, all bearing torches, as I should suppose, in number many hundreds. Then a single figure, a miserable friar, of some low order apparently, barefooted, with his cord round his waist, bearing on his back a common coffin-shell, totally unornamented; in fact, a few poor boards tacked together; immediately after him, a sumptuous and highly raised car or bier, on the front and lower part of which was a splendid display of armorial bearings, and

above the body. It was a lady—of a fine person, and noble and handsome aspect. She lay extended; her hands joined as in prayer; her face, her hands, and her feet naked and uncovered; the rest of her person appeared in a stole of black, and such as showed the beauty of her form. She appeared to be about thirty years of age. Her countenance I shall never forget; it was extremely placid, pale, had no sunken and worn character, as if disease had touched it. You could scarcely believe there was not consciousness remaining; or whether remaining, as of the world left, or imparted as of the new world, were the doubt. It passed; and then followed a long train similar to that which preceded the body, of monks and friars, and all religious orders numberless, with torches, and singing as they passed “the Miserere,” as did the whole procession. I did not follow to the church, for I was afraid of losing my way; and I had heard strange tales of the streets of Rome, which deterred me. In this case the parade lost its vanity and pride, for it seemed less of the individual than of human grandeur in the abstract, and that set up even by the church itself as a broad text upon death, and humility, and all things, rather to be offered than displayed at the foot of the cross in the sanctuary to which the procession was moving. How contemptible did all the funerals I had ever seen, in which display was affected, seem after this! There is much in the idea that no unhallowed hands touch the body—be it so, or not, you are persuaded it is the case. There is no vulgar intervention, between life, death, and the tomb. Every act, after the breath has departed, is of sanctity and religious rite.

I was on another occasion much struck with this. Turning the corner of a street in Rome, also, and at mid-day, I suddenly came upon a tall personage dressed in ecclesiastical habit, carrying before him a coffin, in which was a child, a girl, probably about ten years of age. She was very beautiful. To say the face was pale would ill describe the appearance; it was marble pallor, with a look as if it had been recently so converted from living flesh and blood. Yet the idea of weight conveyed by the word marble must be excluded from that celestialized look and

substance. Indeed, seeing that it was to the body of one of the age I have mentioned, it has since been a source of some wonder that the priest could so easily carry it, and that surprise still more spiritualizes the subject. But that it was so pale, it might have been, to the imagination, an angel caught sleeping, and brought in the flowers of Paradise in which it had decked itself—for there were flowers in festoons from head to foot. None followed—there was but the priest with this beautiful child. It has been, thought I, discovered in its death to be an angel, and has put off in this sleep all its earthly ties and thoughts. Nor parents, nor relatives, must follow it. It must be laid by priest's hands in the temple for a season—then will sister angels come to awaken her, to own her, and to bear her away. It was but a few moments while the ecclesiastic was passing, that I gazed upon the figure, yet often has the vision recurred to my mind; how quick is thought, how searching is observation, when a mystery, nature knows not what, makes the impression!

I said, Eusebius, that undertakers keep clerical company for mutual advantage—let the relatives look to that—but when they are in league with the medical profession, let the sick man look to what stuff he takes. Many years ago my good father, whom you know, Eusebius, to have had a natural antipathy to any thing sordid, was sent for to receive his farewell and blessing from an aged aunt upon her sick-bed at Bath. He arrived in time to see her alive, and likewise to have an interview with the apothecary, who, on taking leave at the door—the old lady yet living—said, softly and significantly, to my father, putting a half a guinea at the same time into his hand, for he took him for the butler, my father being particular in his dress—“Be so good, sir, as to inform the family that my brother is an undertaker.” Fagots and fury! gloves and hatbands! but such a thing as this ought to be looked into. If such should be the practice now at Bath or elsewhere, we are none of us safe in our beds. I have observed that an undertaker pays his court to the penurious wealthy. Misers are frequently known to be profuse in this their last, their only expenditure. They not uncommonly give very large directions for their funerals; and,

with a whimsical inconsistency, have driven hard bargains upon the occasion, which they are shrewd enough to know will not be adhered to, and, in some instances, have given an order on their heirs for the amount, and taken discount beforehand for their own funerals. It is but one of the freaks of pride. I knew a man who denied his aged wife, with whom he had lived forty years, in her last illness medical attendance or nurse, and the many little comforts she wanted. But once dead, his affection was shown by extraordinary magnificence in her funeral. Great was the display. The coffin was the most sumptuous that could be; all went on, to the universal astonishment of the neighbourhood, at great cost. But alas, the fit was over the day before the funeral should take place. A thought struck him that he could save something in conveyance of the coffin from the undertaker's, and in the dusk of the evening he sent for it home in a dung-cart. It upset by the way, perhaps through the malice and the contrivance of the undertaker, and arrived in broad day at the miser's door, daubed with mud, and a troop of hooting boys after it. He forgot to give directions respecting his own burial; perhaps the costly experiment and failure of his wife's interment sickened him; his son certainly did not trouble his head about the magnificence of it.

The celebrated Van Butchel was worthy of our respect, not so much for his beard and spotted horse, as for his determination and success in defrauding the black fraternity of their unreasonable expectations. He was at no sumptuous cost for *his* wife. It had been said that an annuity had been bequeathed to her, "as long as she should be above ground." Be that, however, as it may. He did preserve her above ground, and above ground she may be now perhaps. For he was the inventor of a new pickle, and in the experiment the great John Hunter was coadjutor. It is quite pleasant to think that one human being in the great city could escape the hands of the black harpies. The old woman in Horace was to be carried oiled, to see if it was possible for her to slip through the hands of her heir and the undertakers. But

the pickle of Madame Van Butchel was a happier thing, for through it she was never carried out at all, but preserved at home.

If a man would but consider every funeral he sees as his own, or as specimens of the trade, from which to select for himself, how much absurdity, mockery, and expense would he determine to cut off. Some have taken a fancy to have their coffins made, while in good health themselves, and kept them constantly before their eyes. This may be bravery or cowardice; they may think thus to reconcile themselves by degrees to that which they scarcely dare face in all its reality. But to rehearse the funeral in full, even to the laying out the gloves and handkerchiefs, and to the examination of the accounts of the "forty per cents," would, if it became a fashion, doubtless ruin the trade. For, if men themselves were not satisfied with the rehearsal, their heirs would be. Milton rehearsed his, but that was to keep off the reality. There are many who profess to give up the world, to shut themselves up for the rest of their lives, who would do well to take this method of announcing to their friends their defunct state, that no further inquiries may be made about them, a practice which some debtors have found very convenient; for men desperately in debt, by so doing, may, like skilful divers, plunge over head and ears, in the sight of their creditors, and come up elsewhere. That a rich man, however, should see himself dead and buried, and then sit down to write his own epitaph, and send it per post to his executors, would be past belief, if it were not to be found among the freaks of humanity. There is an example, Eusebius, within my and your memory. You remember Sir Giles — the sceptic—of — Park. It is generally supposed that he died abroad; but no such thing—by some means or other the truth has come out. Weary of property and prosperity, and of having no wants ungratified but the greatest, that of knowing what he wanted; morose, suspicious, misanthropic, he had long quarrelled with Providence for too amply providing for him; and more out of spite than conviction had long professed himself an atheist. At the age of seventy he

meditated a new scheme of happiness ; the only bar to the execution of which, for some time after the conception of it, being that it would confer happiness on others, a thing he never by any chance intended. He had for years shut himself up within his own domain, and had mostly taken his exercise by nightfall. In these nightly excursions he visited the owls, and the owls visited him, and they were mutually satisfied that they had no other society. It occurred to him that the monks of La Trappe must be an improvement on them, inasmuch as there must be less noise in the convent. He formed, therefore, the scheme to become a member of their or some other monkish order. Whither he retired is not known. He left his beautiful domains, just at the moment his extensive lands and gardens were putting on their best summer looks, and gently breathing in every wind "enjoy."

This invitation was too much for him, for he was determined not to enjoy any thing. So he departed, ostensibly to pass a few months on the Continent. Thither he went, taking with him only one old faithful domestic. He proceeded to the town of B——. Having been there a few weeks, he opened his scheme to this old and tried servant, and made him solemnly swear to keep the secret, and perform his part in the scheme—to give out that he was dead—and to procure a mock funeral. And to secure his fidelity, he showed him a very beneficial codicil in his will, not available but in case of his real or supposed death. I pass over the condition of the poor old domestic—he had served his master too long to dispute his will—and now there was a lurking wish that nobody else would dispute it. It had been law to him, and might be in the eyes of others. The plan is agreed upon. The old domestic becomes acquainted with some of the under attendants at the hospital of —, and by their means, under pretence that his master is a Professor of Anatomy, procures a body—conveys it to the lodgings—and, all minor matters prepared for the deception, tells the people of the house that a friend of his master's had died suddenly while paying him a morning visit. The body under the real name of his master is coffined, and mag-

nificent orders given for the interment. Things being in this state, the domestic writes to the next heir an account of his master's sudden death; that he had been obliged to deposit the body in lead, and all was ready for the funeral, and "waiting further orders," &c. &c.

The heir arrives, with little show of sorrow, and, strange to say, this rather amused than offended the old gentleman, Sir Giles, who now under the disguise of a red wig and other ways and means of metamorphosis at the recommendation of his servant to the undertaker, has become one of the official attendants upon his own funeral. Every thing was magnificently ordered, as becoming the rank of so considerable a man.

In his capacity of assistant undertaker, he was initiated into the mysteries, was even pleased with the sober riot and licentious decorum, the cheating, the pilfer, the knavery, and felt a new joy in his misanthropy. "Hung be the heavens with black." Though the undertaker spread showers of silk, and suspended as clouds his sombre broad cloth, they were to him but as Xerxes' arrows, that shut out the day, but did not hit the sun of happiness that now, for the first time, shone in his heart. Happy to him was the day of his death, but far happier that of his burial. He looked upon his heir as the fool that had taken the burden of his station and property off his shoulders; and as he would only have hated him the more had he shown any feeling on the occasion, he was quite indifferent to the degree of sorrow he affected or omitted to affect. After the funeral he walked away, no one ever knew whither, bequeathing, as he fully believed, to his heir, all the miseries of prosperity unalloyed. Among his papers was found his epitaph: "*παντα κενος και παντα το μηδεν.*" The old domestic has recently died, and bequeathed his money to the Ebenezer Chapel at T——, and had disclosed, before his death, to relieve his conscience, so much as has enabled me to tell you the story. I have only a word or two to add to this long letter, that, in my spleen against all undertakers, that they may more effectually mourn in their professional calling, and get their "forty per cent" with entire impunity, I will remind them of the

ancient discipline of their tribe among the Scythians, and sincerely wish they would return to it. Herodotus tells us, that when the king died, the undertakers who attended him (I will use the words of the historian), "cut off part of one ear, shave their heads, wound themselves on the arms, forehead and nose, and pierce the left hand with an arrow. Having done this, they accompany the chariot to another district, and this manner is observed in every province, till, having carried the dead body of the king through all his dominions, they bury him in the country of the Garrhians." There is scarcely an undertaker's array, provided he be of any note, and has been long in the trade, that would not furnish the following list to be strangled—"a concubine to be strangled, with a cup-bearer, a cook, a groom, a waiter, a messenger, certain horses." A royal funeral in those days was something worth seeing—for, not satisfied with the above, "they took the king's ministers, fifty in number, and strangled them; and with them the king's stud, fifty beautiful horses, and after they have *emptied and cleansed their bellies* (the king's ministers, they having been supposed to have filled them extraordinarily,) they fill them with straw, and sew them up again. Then they lay two planks of a semicircular form upon four pieces of timber, placed at a convenient distance, with the half circle upwards; and when they have erected a sufficient number of these machines, they set the horses upon them, spitted with a strong pole, quite through the body to the neck; and thus one semicircle supports the shoulders of the horse, the other his flank, and his legs are suspended in the air. After this they bridle the horses, and, hanging the reins at full length upon posts erected to that end, mount one of the fifty they have strangled, upon each horse, and fix him in the seat by driving a straight stick upwards from the end of the back-bone to his head, and fastening the the lowest part of that stick in an aperture of the beam that spits the horses. Then, placing these horsemen quite round the monument, they all depart; and this is the manner of the king's funeral." The Scythians were a sensible people.

When Dr. Prideaux offered to the publisher his connexion of the Old and New Testament, the bookseller remarked that it was a dry subject, and he could not safely print it, unless he could enliven it with a little humour. Perhaps, my dear Eusebius, you will charge me with making such an attempt upon a grave subject. Be that as it may, I know very well that if I do not make you laugh, you will laugh without me.

Ever yours,

Z.

A PASSAGE OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

IN A LETTER TO EUSEBIUS.

(Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, 1838.)

I SUPPOSE the "*mens sana in corpore sano*," the sound mind in a sound constitution, would be proof at least against weather, and elastic through all the wear and tear of life. The spirits of some are ever alert, and guard every avenue through which care may enter. With others the five senses are all traitors, and ready to let the enemy into the citadel of the heart at the shortest notice. Some grow demented under the charm of music—a gentle touch will thrill over the whole frame of youth. My danger and my delight are both in the sense of seeing. The eye is the most sensitive organ. There are certain moments every day that a feeling of uncomfortableness comes over me—frequently positive melancholy; and it is from that which many people love, so that I am left to wonder at our different natures. The effect of twilight distresses me—the light of departing day. It is not because the light is small in quantity; it is in its quality. Not the quantity; for exclude, in ever so great a degree, the light of day, reduce it by shutters and blinds as much as may be, I am rather pleased, certainly unaffected by any touch of melancholy. But in a moment, when I may be engaged busily, and my understanding unconscious of the hour, as the declining sun has reached a certain point, a sense of misery comes over me. I frequently shut my eyes at the instant of the sensation, but that is not enough; there is an impression through the eyelids—and, what is strange, it is not dissipated by candles, until the light of day, if it may so be called, is completely ex-

cluded. I know not but that the artificial and natural lights combatting each other, provoke a greater pain. Memnon's head roared at the rising, my groans are at the setting sun. I am, too, more affected within doors than in the fields. I am persuaded there must be something in the quality of light at this time of day, that has escaped the notice of philosophers. Nor is the effect the same at all times of the year—the most distressing feeling is towards the end of autumn—then, indeed, in a certain measure it affects all, and has become notorious. But there is not a day in the year in which I do not feel it in some degree. There is a quarter of an hour worse than that which took its name from Rabelais. I am not suffering from it now; but a little more than half an hour ago, this fourth day of December, the evil influence was strong upon me. I was in a lane, returning home from visiting a cheerful friend. I had walked a mile or two only, when the cold moment broke upon the sight: cold and comfortless did all appear to me; the rutty, damp, yet half frozen lane; the melancholy leafless boughs shooting up into the dull gray sky; the lower branches and leafage of hedges huddled together, without order, without beauty, as if hurrying from, if they could do so, and cowering under the melancholy light; the broad gray band of cloud, not unaccompanied by lighter vapour coming in, and gradually overspreading and making less the warmer light, every instant becoming more lurid—this cloud, or this night rather, coming in upon nature, like an evil genius, to drive her from her patrimony, and to hold a wide and surly dominion in her stead. All was of the foul fiend. The fiend of fen and quagmire, and the fiend of the heart-care—first cousins, showing their affinity by sympathies of howl and groan, from the utmost verge of the horizon to the innermost core of human life, and even sometimes by a stillness of electric horror.

And yet was there a blithe country girl that drove her melancholy cows to or from milking, and heeded not the evil hour, or the foul fiend, though his leaden finger had passed over her perhaps fair, or nut-brown forehead, and given it a hue that utterly belied the song she was singing,

if song it could be; for to my sense the damp earth and air were dividing it between them, and flinging it back upon the ear mutteringly and in mutilation. And now night is over all—ruts, leafage, cattle, earth and sky, are obliterated like a feeble outline under a deep wash of Indian ink. I feel not the miseries without; I am beyond their power. I am within—in the shelter of home. I am lighted by the real magician's lamp. No magic circle ever bid defiance to demon more effectually than this blessed inclosure of four bright walls, rich in simple patterns, from which shine out partially, and with enticing looks of delight, well-varnished pictures in their gilt frames. Their very surfaces look sleek, and happy, sensitive, companionable, as they are, and communicative of ideas: and here I sit among them,

“Monarch of all I survey.”

And oh! how unlike the miserable Selkirk, when the cold hour came upon his brow in his lonely island, and his heart was filled with despair. A cheerful warm fire, a few gentle home-sunny faces that bring spring in contact with winter; objects of taste fascinating, yet unobtruding; voices that are always music, and music proper when you will; and sometimes silence, contemplative or excursive in fancy, the quiet thankfulness for blessings felt and twice enjoyed in that thankfulness; the consciousness of freedom from tyrant self or tyrant custom; no storm beating at your windows or at your heart—what a contrast are they all to that “darkness visible,” that evil hour of external day that makes up the *αβιωτον βιον*, the life that cannot be lived, and that they must feel the misery of, who rush for shelter from this present misery to the melancholy pond, or the garret gallows!

How striking are the contrasts of life!—And as I thought thus, I retraced my life step by step; and as the cheerfulness of all around me would not let the mind dwell upon the gloomy, I determined to steal a passage from my autobiography, which rather whimsically shows some of the contrasts of things, of life, and manners. And you perceive, my dear Eusebius, what nonsense I

have daringly spurted from my goosequill by way of preface, and from its gravity you will think it no preface at all to so simple a matter as I have to narrate. But a kind friend will clearly see intelligence through obscurities of diction and difficulties of grammar; it will beam from his own eye on the paper, if there be little there before; and in your sight, and through your own brightness, my dear Eusebius, the letter of your friend becomes an illuminated missal.

Yet have missals of this kind been somewhat reduced in value; the golden age of letters has long departed—then came the silver—but now literary love and friendship are mere dross; the tenderest as well as most hostile communications to be had for fourpence, so the copper age of letters hath come upon us. “*Ætas mox dataura progeniem vitiosiore*”—that is, the post-office will be nothing more than a *Penny Magazine*. This is a sort of “*post obit*” given by the ministry for their continuance in office. A truce with foolery, either theirs or my own, Eusebius, and let me come to the incident I have engaged to tell you; and if you publish my letter in *Maga*, as you have before done, I give you timely notice that we shall both be considered indecent characters, for I must use discarded words to speak about discarded things—things cast off—and that, but for a few remnants among the poor, would have been altogether brushed away from our vocabulary. For I must tell you of my being properly “*brecched*,” and sent out into the world, that is, to a public school. Let others boast that they have lived in the age of Wellingtons and Greys; let us, Eusebius, rejoice that we were born in the age of breeches. And why should we be ashamed of that *toga virilis*, the first day of first assuming the which was in our time a day of honour, a white day, and marked with “money in both pockets?”

You have always considered it a disgrace to the present generation that they should ever have discarded either the name or thing—and the substitution of “*inexpressibles*,” as an immodest lie, unworthy the simplicity of manhood. We were the “*Braccotorum pueri*,” as Juvenal has it, sons of the breeched. Our fathers were

breeched before us. Now old and young are fallen into the "lean and slippered pantaloons." *Braccæ*—*Anglicé*, breeches. There is something sterling in the name, that comes not mincingly upon the tongue, but boldly, as it should, out of the mouth. *Braccæ* are of ancient origin—*vide* Ainsworth—" *Vox Gallica*,"—meaning that many have been *galled* who have worn them—and so let the *galled* jade wince. The *laxæ braccæ* were said to be "shipmen's hose," so saith the same authority. Many have I seen unshipped, and for that purpose should rather be called "*demissæ braccæ*." For the *laxæ*—*vide* Sir Charles Wetherill; for the *demissæ*—consult the Education Board, or rather Board of Education, not the modern, but a "chip of the old block," if there be such, as I have seen at the college of St. Mary's Winton, yet in these degenerate days existing. But of that ancient, sweet, and wholesome custom anon. At present I must maintain the respectability of breeches—they are Greek, as the very name implies, *βραχυς* short—*βραχῆαι* "shorts"—hence the Roman's *Braccæ*—hence breeches.

How then, Mr. Ainsworth, can you have the face to say that they are Gallic, *vox Gallica*,—for we all know the Gaels boast of philibegs? and wear no breeches; and if by Gallic you mean the French, they were, for a long period, *Sunsculottes*, and are very little better now. There are, however, who deny the etymology, and assert the word is from *ῥακος*, not *βραχυς*. "*ῥακος*," saith the lexicon, "a piece let in"—"a rag." Now, though the piece let in may answer to very many *braccæ*, the word *braccæ* would here lose the *b*, a very material part in formation; and it would be not a part, but a mere patch put for the whole. Certainly I have both seen and worn many that have been really rags; but, as I said before, there is a *b* in breeches, there was ever a *b* in *braccæ*, and there ever will be a *β* in *βραχυς*; for though *βραχυς* expresses "shorts," they have never been shortened yet to that pass, and it is to be hoped never will be; they might as well be taken away altogether.

I do not consider that I was properly breeched until I was between twelve and thirteen years of age; what I wore before that time I make no account of, the materials

were as often feminine as masculine, things really inexpressibles, made out of my father's, my mother's, and even sisters' garments. I took no note of them; I was not proud of them. The first virile pair I ever put on, were upon the occasion of my going to St. Mary's College at Winchester, and it happened thus that they came to be what they were. My father, who was a literary character, and entirely given up to books, happened to have in his hand one of those old books one sees in old respectable libraries, of most sombre appearance, when my mother abruptly asked him what colour John's new breeches should be. My father, who had forgotten all about me, my breeches, my schooling, and every thing else, held his book somewhat loosely a foot or two nearer my mother, whilst he looked in her face as only conscious of the interruption, not having an idea of the subject of it. My mother looked at the book. She had been accustomed to signs and dumb-show, and concluded my father to mean of this colour.

"That," quoth she, "is a mouse-colour."

"Yes," says he, "mouse-colour."

"And what material?" said my mother.

My father looked at the book and said "leather."

Nothing more was said, and so it turned out that the first breeches, and with which I made my public appearance in the world, for such may be called the first going to a public school, were mouse-coloured leather; or, I think, according to the vocabulary of those days, I should say "leathers."

The present generation little know, that when their fathers were born the art of breeches-making was not confounded with the general cutting-out and trimming business of the tailor. It was a separate business, and the leather-breeches maker, in particular, was a man of considerable skill and importance.

I have heard dandies say that no man could make a *pair* of boots. The right foot must go to Hoby, the left to some one else. Luckily for the breeches-maker, his right and left made an indivisible pair. They were lovely and undivided.

This being the case, the morning after this scene in

the domestic pantomime, Mr. Flight, leather-breeches maker, was sent for to measure Master John Cracklatin for a pair of mouse-colour leather breeches. I do not think I had ever before been measured—it was, therefore, an epoch in my life, and well do I remember it—and Mr. Flight, too—a tall, robust man, marked with the small-pox, with a face like tripe; and I suppose it was the resemblance of his tripe-like skin to leather that made me ask him, as I looked into his face, if *my* leathers would be smooth. I never could help thinking that he punished me for this afterwards—but I must not anticipate the trying-on—and it may well be called a trial.

And here, my dear Eusebius, I cannot resist the temptation of making a digression to the times when we, as children, had no trials at all; and I do not believe there can be a greater contrast in life than was in those days felt and experienced by children male, in passing from the age of infancy to that of boyhood. You must have observed that mothers are much prouder of male than female infants. They stick a sort of rose in the cap, as a badge of dignity, that all the world may know what they are. And, I am sure, when they first begin to teach them to walk, and that is often much earlier than they should, they take great pains to *show* what they are. They shame us men out of all our proprieties, and make us turn away our modest faces. An infant male, then, is the greatest treasure and darling—is really a little idol—a “dumb idol” at first—but he is soon taught to lord it with a loud voice, a practice which some never are able to get rid of, and which, with a just retribution, they often pay back upon that sex from whom they have acquired it in indulgence. And it is curious that when the child female is taken to as the better pet, the indulged pampered boy is at once rudely cast off, and told abruptly that—

“Girls must have white bread, and nice sugar sops;
Boys must have brown bread, and good hard knocks.”

Neither you nor I, Eusebius, would venture to object to the doctrine, for rough discipline of some sort is necessary to those who have to go through a crooked perverse

world; but the time of the announcement, and the previous idolatry, make the lesson a somewhat cruel one. Now nothing could be greater than the contrast I suffered. I have a perfect recollection of myself in this idol state. I dare say I was a pretty, for all said I was a beautiful child. I remember my dress; and where will you find a finer idol, ready to step down from his pagoda-pedestal to walk the ground?—to walk it!—to dignify it with the pressure of his footstep. I well remember strutting in the finest nankeen dress, with a long and broad blue sash, a beautifully crimped frill, and a white hat and feathers—was taken up and kissed wherever I was met, and fondled, and talked to in a language that must have much retarded my learning real English. How do children acquire their language when they are invariably addressed in a jargon? But they do—and I learned the vulgar tongue, and used it too; and then, when the pampered, idolized child grows towards boyhood, he is told to know himself—and how should he?—finery and flattery are no longer for him. The next stage of life is one of real hardship, for he has not only to learn but to unlearn. He is, or rather was, in our time, turned out of all favour. For kisses he had kicks; and, according to a vulgar saying, “more kicks than halfpence.” The contrast was horrible—from a pet to an outcast. I am told all is altered now, and that the fine gentleman commences with the baby. As to myself, I was a little good-for-nothing; half my time in tatters, which nobody noticed; and even at the more advanced period, when my mother asked the question of my father, it was unquestionably time I should have new breeches of some sort or other. There never passed a fifth of November, from the age of seven, that a hole was not regularly squibbed through whatever I had—a hole, do I say?—I should say many, if it was not that in a short time they all ran into one. I was, from that age, as unlike the sweet child in the nankeen dress, blue sash, and hat and feathers, as a dove is like a badger—not that I was as well clad as the latter. The first feeling of the young cast-off was desolate enough. Oh, unfortunate age! when the little urchin can receive impressions, and make none. I do not mean to say the

impressions I received were of a tender kind. I only wonder that I did not turn savage, and that I did not through life bear a dislike to women : for from them came my chief pain.

There was a little incident at this age of early abandonment and desertion of favour, that might have ruined in the bud the tenderness which, nevertheless, in after life came to mature blossom. Discarded by mother, sisters, cousins, and pushed from home by maid-servants, I one day sought solitary solace in a quarry, not far from a temporary residence my father had taken in the country. There I sat, as meditative as such an incipient boy could be, when a little girl, (a village tailor's daughter,) about my own age, came into the quarry, and sat by me for companionship. The spot was certainly retired ; and, at another age, my situation might have been critical, and liable to scandal—but scandal I knew not then. How soon was I to know it ! Could the babes in the wood be more innocent ! And whence did the blow come ?—from my father. It happened that, in one of his walks, with his book as usual in his hands, that he might, without interruption, give vent to his feelings, and repeat aloud a pathetic passage, into the quarry he walked. He was the most untheatrical man living in all his actions, a man of singular modesty, which, alas, I inherit ! To spout a speech, or lift his arm in action to the words, knowingly, before man, woman, or child, would have been impossible ;—but here he did it unwittingly. There was something to me so ludicrous in it, so unexpected, that, in the midst of his *viva voce* exclamations I could not suppress a titter. He heard it—and saw his unfortunate son, and one Sukey Bowers, the tailor's daughter, sitting hand in hand, like Cupid and Psyche, his only admiring audience. I believe he was more shocked than I was. He had presence of mind to recover his propriety, and with a good-natured smile asked the little girl her name, and walked away ; and when I returned home he had so completely passed his jokes over the whole house, that there was not one in it that did not banter me—and miserable I was for many a month on account of it. Day after day was I asked if I had seen “ my Sukey

Bowers." Heaven forgive me ! I verily believe I hated her ; and if I had heard her knell I might have been the happier. I cannot philosophize upon this antipathy of very young persons to the tender passion ; it is, nevertheless, very curious. I was certainly as miserable because I did not love when I could not love, as ever I was when under the " amiable insanity."

But this is all a digression from my new breeches, and never will lead to them, and all this while the tall and robust Mr. Flight is standing to take measure of me, young Master Cracklatin, for a pair of new mouse-colour leathers, wherein I am to make my public entry upon life in the best manner I can. Naturally I put my best leg foremost, then the worst ; out went one hip, then the other, and soon all my dimensions were noted upon parchment. The mysterious notches struck me with wonder, and when he put the important document in his pocket, I thought he carried that with him which should one day " give the world assurance of a man." Not that I then made the quotation from Shakspeare—I was not so learned—but, as Mr. Puff said, we both hit upon the same thought.

Of my acquirements and fitness for the college of St. Mary Winton at that time, you shall determine, Eusebius, by the following translation which I made to my father, who took me in hand some time before, and from a private school. A private school ! Oh ! the indignity of going to a private school, as I afterwards proudly thought ; but I have passed over preparatory schools, at many of which I served, I cannot say *merui*—detestable all. What with tossings in the blanket, putting forth my feet for peg-tops to aim at, and wiring the toe, according to the recipe of the then and ever-odious Latin grammar, fists, cane, and privations ; and, I am sorry to add, meannesses of big and little—all I can say is, that it is a wonder a boy ever comes out of the ordeal with health, temper, learning, or morals.

But this is another digression, so now to the translation, by which you will discover that I did not add a knowledge of prosody to my acquirements and deficiencies in grammar.

My father gave me the following line of Ovid ; I do not know that I have read it since, but I well remember it, and where I hammered at it, with a little dictionary in two volumes, Entick's, on the ground ; a little green patch, near a stile, with my back to the cow-house. The *locus quo* has, however, little to do with it. We are all garrulous, Eusebius—now for the line :

“Jam mihi deterior canis aspergitur ætas.”

My father had laid down his book, seemingly not liking the interruption.

The word was given, “construe,” which I did thus. *Jam*, now ; *deterior canis*, a mongrel dog ; *aspergitur*, besprinkled ; *ætas*, age. “The deuce he did !” said my father gravely, put his hand to his mouth, and walked out of the room. He seldom laughed, that is, rightly laughed ; but I heard, as he ascended the stairs, tit, tit, tit, and a peculiar note he had, whether from his nose or the roof of his mouth, I cannot tell, when any thing moved him either to pleasure or displeasure. I stood like a *deterior canis*, a mongrel ; but where my error was, for the life of me I could not then tell.

It was whimsical enough that age turning a man's hair gray should be metamorphosed into a mongrel, and so ill-bred a one ; and such another metamorphosis, I will venture to assert, is not to be found in Ovid's famous books of that name.

While on this subject, my dear Eusebius, do let me boast of a little improvement within the year. It is not a proof of great scholarship, but there was an improvement in taking an ingenious shot at a passage. This was at Winchester. In the morning we had been reading Virgil, and when a boy was thrown out at *prensos boves*, and it came to my turn, I was prompted by another boy, and cried out boldly, *col oxen*.

“What do you mean ?” said the master.

“Oxen of the cottage, sir,” said I.

“Oh, you sound-catcher !” said he ; and all laughed.

To remedy this defeat, I took particular pains with my Livy—the evening lesson, in which was included the

passage respecting the prodigies in the Roman camp. Now had it not been that a notable prodigy was to be described, I should not have blundered. The passage is—" *Nam et lupus intraverat castra, laniatisque obviis, ipse intactus evaserat, et examen apum in arbore prætorio imminente considerat.*" Thus I translated it. *Nam*, for; *et*, and; *lupus*, a wolf; *intraverat*, entered; *castra*, the camps; *laniatis obviis*, to look for the sheep; *que*, and; *ipse*, he himself; *evaserat*, escaped; *intactus*, unhurt; *et*, and; *considerat*, sat down upon; *examen*, a swarm; *apum*, of bees; *in arbore*—here I was not allowed to go further—a general roar quite discomfited me. The master twisted his mouth, and curled his nose; but it would not do, and so he fairly laughed with the rest.

"A very uncomfortable seat, Mr. Wolf," said he, "and perhaps a tickler would make you construe better."

For myself, I was in despair, and thought the field of literature was no field for my father's son, and in truth I thought he had enough for both. I soon found, however, that others were not much wiser; took courage, and have successfully encountered the great and little Goes. But to the breeches, Eusebius; methinks I hear you say, will the boy never put them on!—the new mouse-colour leathers. Have patience—they shall be on directly—no, that is impossible with leather breeches in those days. The evening before my departure, being booked to Winchester, behold the arrival of Mr. Flight with his foreman and a bag—and in that bag, or rather out of that bag, were turned my new mouse-colour leather breeches. I longed to try them on, and would have retired for that purpose, but was stopped by Mr. Flight, with, "No, young gentleman, I must get them on." "You get them on?" said I, wishing to have the first wear myself. "Yes," said he, with a grin, "on *you*, I mean; they would hardly fit *me*." He was right; it was impossible: in my ideas of my own magnitude I had forgotten that; and to me even they were a tight fit, as you shall hear. First, Mr. Flight's foreman took off his coat, and tucked up his shirt sleeves. Then Mr. Flight took the breeches, and gave his shoulders a slight shake as if to try their strength—then told me to strip. It was evident they could not be

put on over any thing else, so behold me *in nubibus*. Had I been to be initiated in "the great mysteries," Mr. Flight could not have held forth the articles of initiation with more solemnity. For a moment I poised my right leg over them, supported bodily by the foreman. I thrust my leg down; alas! it would not go far; then, by a lift of the foreman, I contrived to get in my other leg; then I felt myself suspended, and then came "the tug of war." Mr. Flight took the waistband, and while he was shaking me into the new mouse-colours, the foreman was forcing my unwilling limbs into them by rubbing and smoothing, and tugging and pulling, and by more actions than there are words to express them; by jerking me, lifting me, dragging me, and tossing me all round the room, at least half an hour before I could make any substantial way whatever into my first real virile apparel. We were all forced to take rest; and I could not help seeing, that whatever profit he got by them was got "with the sweat of his brow." After a little rest, at it we went again; "the seconde fitte," as it might be fairly called. But here I was helpless; I could not move a knee; not a joint would bend. And there was I suspended by the waistband, the first edition of my father's learning bound in leather-calf, but—not lettered. That last finish came a long while afterwards. It certainly took a good hour and a half to get me in. The descent was not *facilis*; but to get out of them was worse. This was indeed a toil and labour. "*Sed revocare gradum.*" "*Hic labor, hoc opus est.*" It is painful to think of it even now; so before the final tug, we must have rest, and I will take advantage of it to make what apology I can for my mis-translation.

I had taken *obviis* for *ovibus*, and *ovibus* I knew were sheep, and *laniatis* I considered to be the adjective of *lana*, wool, and woolly sheep is mere tautology, and the dative case is, for; and really so many verbs are omitted in Latin, why might they not be here, and so I only supplied "to look," and I now gravely declare that many a learned commentator and expositor has supplied a great deal more out of his own head, and with as little probability of being right. And what is more natural than that

a wolf should go out to look for the sheep; and where should he find them but out of the camp? And now, Eusebius, I have but to call all who think differently blockheads, dolts, idiots, and so forth; and you will find the above defence not a very unfair specimen of learned annotations, if you will only put it into tolerable Latin.

Now then, it is time to extricate myself, if not out of this passage in Livy, at least to make a passage out of my new mouse-colour leather breeches. Mr. Flight caught hold of me round the body, his foreman had hold of the breeches at the knees—I kicked, I plunged; they pulled: luckily my joints held my limbs together as well as the breeches—it was a frightful endeavour—but “*nil arduum est mortalibus*”—nothing is too hard for man, and that, by-the-by, was said of a *Flight*. Mr. Flight was a man of courage, and his foreman scorned to be outdone—so at it again they went, “like master, like man;” “nothing is denied to well directed labour.” I was at length free of my breeches, and they were free of me. And from that day there is nothing I more admire than the political axiom, that “free bottoms shall carry free goods.” Mr. Flight making his exit, assured me all the difficulty was over, that a second trial was quite unnecessary, and that henceforth they would fit like a glove. A second trial I was not then equal to, and readily believed him.

I know, Eusebius, you delight to be a boy again; will you therefore go with me through the scene of my first entrance, not at a private school, indeed, but at that noble school—Winchester, whose walls are and ever will be dear to me, for to that excellent school do I owe all that I know worth knowing, and all I feel worth feeling. The generous high-minded character of our public schools, I need not descant upon to you. I had known private, some ill conditioned from the masters, others from the boys; and with the latter generally is the error. I know not why it is, but there is a meanness among them totally unknown at public schools—perhaps I should say *was*. In my days, a petted, home-fed, pampered, indulged boy, first sent, at an early age, to a rough private school, like Lucian’s private tutor, with a pot-belly that he could neither fill nor get rid of, was the most miserable of crea-

tures on earth. The fact is, our public schools are the growth of ages, and *laws* have grown up with them that must not be infringed; and hence there is a government of law, not of caprice, and the boy feels himself, to a great degree, independent. The school does not take its character from a boy or two, but it is a character by time acquired, handed down, and must be maintained—and is maintained. And now, Eusebius, do you not think it is quite time for me to make my second appearance in my mouse-colour leathers? Not yet. It is not the best time, before I put them on, to discuss a little scholastic discipline? Do not think I mean to insinuate a disciplinary attitude. Only, that when once on, I do not mean to take them off again in a hurry, I might as well not be too proud, and strut about gabbling my say, like the turkey, expanding my tail. Of discipline—why mince the word flogging?—according to old dictionaries, you will find it a good and wholesome exercise for man and boy, (by man, meaning master.) It circulates the blood, and that not too violently; it sets the spirits free and the brain alert. We have scarcely had a poet since Milton, and he was the last that was flogged at the university. What a disgrace, says the prater of modern times and modern nonsense? Tell the boy at Eton, at Winchester, at Westminster, after he had suffered it, that he is disgraced, and your next prating, Mr. Prater, will be in a half whistle without your teeth, and you will not see very clearly through your eyes. Disgraced, indeed! and by enduring just discipline—by daring to obey! Do you think the noble captains that fought at Waterloo had never been flogged? ay, to their honour, they had—and who will say our soldiers want bottom!—" *Nunquam ingenium idem ad res diversissimas, parendum atque imperandum, habilius fuit.*" That was the character of Hannibal—and it is a true description of that acquired by the discipline of our public schools. When you are in danger, I only wish you may show half as fair a face to the enemy as they have.

It is said that a man who marries has given bond to society for his good behaviour. A fine-spirited youth who submits to discipline for conscience sake, who has been

legitimately flogged, has given his bottomry bond, (as merchants call it,) both for his good behaviour and learning—I say who has been legitimately flogged—for here is a great distinction, very observable between the custom at private and public schools. At the latter there are no little, galling, tyrannical oppressions—nothing takes place as punishment but what is well understood upon entering, and by the custom; no greater disgrace than is deserved, if disgrace it can generally be called, is conveyed or implied by submission. And all is open and above-board—for the first thing you see on entering the noble building, the school-room, is a large painting at one end, a portrait of the rod, and this pithy admonition—“*Aut disce, aut discede, manet sors tertia, cæde*. Even the rod is of a prescribed form and dimensions, and supplied by one of the officers of the schools—one of the boys. It is a turned handle, with four long twigs—apple. And there is likewise a prescribed manner of inflicting punishment. The delinquent, without hesitation, kneels down to a block, and two boys, any that like the sport as it is termed, take him up; that is, standing in front of him on the other side of the block, which is, in fact, an immovable bench, the last of many in the row, on which the boys sit while learning their lessons. The “taking up,” is nothing more than the removal of the shirt between the waistband and the waistcoat, so that the space of back left open for punishment is very small, and the twigs of the rod so far apart, that often not one hits, and seldom, indeed, all; and then the master makes but three blows—and these, generally, very lightly, and the matter is over, and little harm done. It is only in case of very great offences another punishment is inflicted, and that is by six blows instead of three; and the boy is then taken up by two officers of the school—boys on duty; and then, indeed, the space for punishment is somewhat larger. All this is, however, according to rule, by which the master is restricted; so that both are under it. For a master to punish in any other way is an unheard of thing; nor would it be submitted to. A cane, or a ferule, or any of the uncertain tyranny of a private school, would not be borne a moment; a rebellion would break out. The boy that will be flogged

will not be cuffed. His dignity, would, indeed, be offended; for I will venture to say there cannot be collected a number of higher-spirited, manly-minded youths, than are to be met with at our public schools; and there is nothing they show their superior manliness in so much as in their obedience to discipline. Custom gives rights, and rights reconcile to punishment. The master, even by adhering to custom, in some respects shows, by example, the beauty of obedience. They have themselves been educated at the school over which they preside; they know the youths under their care are to be passed to the universities, and thence into the world, to adorn it in every rank; and they take pains to inculcate generous sentiments. I was once discovered by the head-master out of bounds—a serious offence. A friend was with me, but I alone was known. We joined the rest just as the master, Dr. Goddard, rode up. He called me out, and asked me who was with me. I was silent. The youth who *was* with me did not give time for the question to be asked again, but boldly stepped forward and said, "I was." The Doctor turned his horse's head and rode away, and, I need not say, never punished either. Thanks, good Doctor, for all your kindness; never may I be ungrateful, and here have a pride, a pleasure, in acknowledging, that many a day in after life have I remembered you with affection; and when I have felt that my taste has been improved, I have ever been thankful to you, to whom I owe that source of enjoyment. "Manners makyth man," was the college motto. There was the precept, in you we found the example. But at this rate I never shall get on my new mouse-colour leather breeches, and it is time, for they will certainly shrink in my box.

"*My box!*"—that of itself would make an episode; but I forbear. A boy's box on first going to school! Yet I will tell an anecdote of the return of a boy's box after his first term at the university. I knew him well, poor fellow! He had an odd stammer, that began with great irresolution of voice, and terminated most decisively with a bounce; and such was the youth, and such was his career. He came to the university quite raw from the country, where he had previously practised to be a clergy-

man, by standing upon stools with the tablecloth round him, marrying, burying, and christening his elderly maiden aunts. Poor boy! he was quite unfit to be trusted as yet from home. He came a clown, and in two or three months returned. What did he not return? But, to his box. He was rusticated for a term or two, and choosing rather to be absent from home for a time, visited a friend. Meanwhile his box, and another box arrived; and, as they were wont, his maiden aunts thought it best to see that all was safe, and unpacked them. Never were elderly maiden eyes so bewildered—so astonished—coats, waistcoats without number—but the breeches, as they lifted them out one after the other, holding them up higher each time in increased astonishment, audibly counting—

“Only think the twentieth pair of pale yellow kerseymere breeches—what could Tom, sister Sue, want of so many? Why, his poor father will be ruined—we shall all be ruined.”

Then Sue took up the outcry, lifting her voice at each pair, and with emphasis—“Look here, sister Kate, twenty-one, twenty-two, twenty-three, *crescendo* twenty-four!!!”

Here the hands and breeches dropped together, and they were watered by a flood of tears.

“The ungrateful boy! didn’t we have made for him,” cried sister Sue, “three excellent pairs out of his father’s greatcoat; he could not have wanted any more.”

Now sister Kate could again go on, but in a low voice of despair—“twenty-five, twenty-six, twenty-seven, oh! oh! oh! twenty-eight—then the last, twenty-nine pair of breeches—the good-for-nothing boy!”

And so it was; in one box he had brought home with him twenty-nine pair of pale lemon-colour kerseymere breeches. Oh ye parents! who send raw youths to the university! it is quite hopeless if you think you can confine their ideas, after the first term, to corduroys, or even mouse-coloured leathers; and you may be quite sure that the turning old greatcoats, by the hands of a village tailor, into habiliments for the seat of learning, is money thrown away.

Now it was not so with me on my first going to college—though that college was but a school, a public one, be

it remembered with pride—as I told you, Eusebius, I had a pair of *new* mouse-coloured leather breeches, and I had put them on once. Would you could have seen me in them then!—but had you seen me in them the second time of putting them on, it would have been a treat, and you would have remembered it, as I do, and therefore write this account of it. But you must be aware my place is taken per coach—Mr. John Cracklatin booked for Winchester college, with one box, containing—for the present we will say no more than one mouse-coloured pair of leather breeches. Accompany me, Eusebius, my first real exit from home; that is, from within ten minutes' reach of home, with such a stock of Latin as I have certified you in this. Be so kind as to go with me, and see me safe lodged. “*Comes jucundus pro vehiculo est.*” My father had gone the same road before me—uncles and cousins without number—all to Winchester. I was therefore taking the family recipe for learning. I had at least a great veneration for my father and his learning, and therefore, though going to school, went at least *half*-willingly, as much as could then be expected of any well-disposed youth—as Homer says, ἔκων ἀεκητι γὰρ θυμῷ. I said my father had gone there before me. I remember his account of his first appearance. His mother took him, for he went first to a preparatory school at Winchester. She told the master, who was not the most gentle-looking of pedagogues, that she wished her son to be particularly looked to, for he was a very delicate boy.

“Ma'am,” said the man, “I have no others; they are all delicate boys.” And so my father found it, for the second day he was flogged, and the third burnt out of his bed, and that was the last he *enjoyed* in a preparatory school.

Do not imagine I was allowed to travel in my new clothes; not a bit of it. Any one might have been ashamed of those I wore. To make my first appearance in them on any stage, much less at Winchester, was impossible. I will not digress to describe my reception, and how very strange all things appeared to me. Every one knows all this; but it is not every one that knows what followed—“*Non cuivis homini contingit.*” You can

easily imagine me in my room in my little bed, by the side of which was my box, and in which room were eight or ten other boys, to me unknown. There I lay, with my treasure by my side ; and that being the case, though a boy and after a journey, I did not sleep too soundly until towards morning. I was awakened early enough, but late for all I had to do. There is no greater offence than the missing chapel in the morning—punishment a flogging. This was announced to me before I went to bed, and as a flogging was to me an unknown thing, it went in my mind according to the Latin, "*omne ignotum pro mirifico*." I was therefore determined to be up betimes, and up betimes I was ; but dressed betimes, that was to be quite another matter. The chapel bell goes a quarter of an hour, and it was going as I opened my box, and there was some distance to the chapel, for I was not then *in* college, but in the head-master's house ; as it is termed, I was a commoner, not on the foundation. Now, imagine that all this while the fatal bell is going, and in such a manner as if it threatened to stop, and I am not dressed yet, nor like to be. Of all things in the world I have ever been averse to early rising ; it was the chief cause of all the punishments I ever received at school. I once wrote a paper against it, and sent it to *Blackwood's Magazine*, where I have a suspicion you, Eusebius, will send this. The early morning light ever creates in me a nausea. I once had a bilious fever from early rising and a pair of yellow plush breeches, and this was on leaving Winchester once on the first morning of holidays ;—but here I find myself in another digression. It cannot be helped ; so here goes my bilious fever.

I had been some years at Winchester then, and had become a pretty considerable puppy ; so what must I do on going home for the holidays, but have a new pair of top-boots, which, when on, I could not get off, so I slept in them all night. Besides my new top-boots, I had a green coatee, yellow kerseymere waistcoat, and a pair of splendid yellow plush breeches. It was the height of summer, very hot weather, and, boots and all as I stood, it was very hot work before I started. There were three of us, and so we took a chaise. We had proceeded about

a mile, when I found that I had left my purse, or something as important, behind me; I ran back to college, and thence to the chaise waiting for me. I never shall forget that return—for by this time the sun was very hot—and as I generally look down when I run, the hot sun, reflected from my yellow plush breeches, and the heat and pressure of my new tight top-boots, so stirred the bile, that by the time I returned home I was actually in a fever. It gave me a disgust to foppery, and I really believe I must date my slovenliness as to dress from that day. This came of deserting the old original mouse-colours, which, with the exception of the first day of actual wearing, served me in good stead.

But, dear me! Eusebius, imagine that all this while the bell has been going "*tempus fugit*"—every toll threatens a flogging, and I cannot for the life of me get on my breeches.

"Why, they don't fit," said one boy.

"Pull at 'em," said another.

"Let us all take a pull at 'em," said a third, who was dressed.

"I shall be flogged, if I do," said a fourth.

"What the d—l do you call 'em?" said a fifth.

"Leathers," said I.

"A pretty leathering you'll have," said he.

"Tuck your shirt above them under the waistcoat," said a sixth, "and they may slip on easier."

This was a good thought, and I did so—still it was very hard work to get them on at all.

"Bell will be down in a minute," said a seventh.

"Do be so kind as to wait for me," said I, beseechingly; "for I do not know the way."

"Wait and be flogged!" said they.

Here was a state of trepidation for a poor boy just from his father's house, within three tolls of a bell of a flogging—dire and unknown thing!—and he standing with his breeches, new mouse-colour leathers, not quite one quarter part on. The thoughts of a flogging at such a time, and in such a situation, may be a very jocose thing to witness, but to have them rushing into the mind, in a torrent of cold-sweat, at the early age of some twelve or

thirteen years, is not very jocose to the sufferer. I never knew of but one boy that actually was, as it were, case-hardened, and took a flogging himself for diversion, and as a joke. It is a singular thing, and therefore, though another digression, I must tell it. The boy's name was Smith, a good family name for case-hardening. Somehow or other, he was insensible in the flogging parts. There was no communication between them and the brain; and here, let me observe, *obiter*, that it is a very absurd practice at private schools to punish one part for another; at public schools they scarcely ever flog for learning, or the lack of it. But why, if the head fails of doing its work, the tail should suffer, I never could hear any good reason given. And why should a dunce be called a blockhead, when it is quite the contrary part goes to the block? But this belongs to the philosophy of schools, and has nothing to do with my breeches, which will never be on—and I had nigh forgotten the flogging story. This Smith did not care a pin for a flogging, and used to put himself in the way of them, for mere amusement to himself and others.

"Smith, again!" the master usually called out at flogging-time, and with a groan. Smith was always ready, affected to kneel down, then rose up again, and said facetiously—

"Allow me, sir, to put my handkerchief under my knees—these breeches cost my father five-and-twenty shillings, and he gave me particular charge not to soil them."

Then would he begin only to kneel down, the master all the while vociferating—"Take him up, take him up!"

"Sir," Smith would say, "be so kind as to hit high and gentle." Then, when fairly down, he would look round, and at every stroke make most horrible faces, as if in dreadful agony, and, when the matter was over, jump up with alacrity, make his bow, and say, "I thank you, sir."

It is evident such a boy must have been incorrigible—and he went away as such—he did not remain more than, if so much as, a half-year.

The bell is 'most down, and in what state am I now with regard to breeches? By dint of great exertion and

help I have them just up to my hips—a little more exertion may get them an inch higher—more than that is hopeless. The boys are quitting me fast. One kind soul remains to show me the way. Hurrah ! I have contrived to get them over, and to button one button ; but then how am I to get my shirt in again ? That must be inevitably tucked under my waistcoat.

"Here," said the boy, "pull it down a little, just to meet, and button your waistcoat over, and nobody will see it—so let's be off." And off we were, as well at least as I could move my knees. I think those who fought in ancient armour must have run, if it is not a bull to say those who fought ran, pretty much as I did. When we arrived at the chapel-door I was done—quite out of breath—and all the boys were just kneeling down. In I shuffled, and down I attempted to kneel directly in front of the master. I had not calculated upon this difficulty. I made a desperate effort, and so far succeeded as to my knees—but in that effort the button burst, and the upper part of my mouse-colour leather breeches, which had been continually stretched, dropped—and discovered to the gaze of eyes sacred and profane, of masters, chaplains, and some hundred or so of boys, my poor unshirted, unshrouded personification of innocence. Could the service go on ?—Did it go on ? I know not. The following half-hour was so like a dream that I have forgotten it ; but I believe it was considered that I had *intended* to insult masters and the whole school by my barefaced—no, not barefaced—impudence. I believe serious thoughts were entertained of expelling me ere I had well entered on my schoolship ; and if I had then taken a flight back, there should have been two lamentable flights, mine and the breeches-maker—for I was hot enough for revenge, and none so small but that they may find means of annoying.

As it was, I was so badgered about my exposition, that I had to fight no less than three battles the very first day to defend the honours of my mouse-coloured leathers. But time is a great stretcher, and so he stretched my breeches. The flight of time did that which the sedentary flight never did. Time, as my early copy-book, set by that greatest of calligraphers, the German, Jansen Von Splut-

terinck, saith, maketh all things easy, and so he made my breeches. Henceforth I shall be of the opinion of the currier in the fable, "*There's nothing like leather.*" Kings that have been made kings from low degree, have kept their poor breeches in remembrance of their humble state. I might have kept mine in remembrance of my *humbled* state, and as monuments of my after knowledge. A heathen would have made them the subject of an apotheosis. If some have been celebrated as having seen the "Siege of Bulleyn," mine had witnessed the siege of Troy. They had sat down many a day with "the seven against Thebes." Taking into account, my dear Eusebius, the seas of ink that have been spilt upon them—the Greek with which they have been bespattered—the versification that has been made *upon* them, and those engraftings of buds from the tree of knowledge, of which I have spoken—I may, without fear of contradiction, say of them, that, wherever they may be, there *must* be the *seat* of learning. So that, "take them for all in all, I ne'er shall look upon their like again."

My dear Eusebius, yours as ever.

HINTS FOR THE HOLIDAYS.

(Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, 1826.)

GENTLE reader! hast thou been a loving observer of the beautiful uncertain weather of our island-clime? We do not mean to ask if you have from youth been in the daily practice of rising from your study-chair at regular intervals, and ascertaining the precise point of Mercury's elevation on the barometrical scale. The idea of trusting, throughout all the fluctuations of the changeful and capricious atmosphere in which we live, to a tube partly filled with quicksilver, is indeed most preposterous; and we have long noticed that meteorologists make an early figure in our obituaries. Seeing the head of the god above the mark "fair," or "settled," out they march in nankeens, without greatcoat or umbrella, when such a thunder-plump falls down in a deluge, that, returning home by water and steam, they take to bed, and on the ninth day, fever hurries them off, victims to their zeal in the cause of natural philosophy. But we mean to ask, have you an eye, and an ear, and a sixth sense, anonymous and instinctive, for all the prognosticating sights, and sounds, and motions, and shapes, of nature? Have you studied, in silence and solitude, the low, strange, and spirit-like whisperings, that often, when bird and bee are mute, come and go, here and there, now from crag, now from coppice, and now from moor, all over the sultry stillness of the clouded desert? Have you listened among mountains to the voice of streams, till you heard them prophesying change in heaven? Have you so mastered the occult science of mists, as that you can foretell each proud

or fair emergency, and the hour when grove, precipice, or plain, shall in sudden revelation be clothed with the pomp of sunshine? Are all Bewick's birds, and beasts, and fishes visible to your eyes in the woods, wastes, and waves of the clouds? And know ye what aerial condor, dragon, and whale, respectively portend? Are the Fata Morgana as familiar to you as the Aberdeen almanac? When a league square hover of crows darkens air and earth, or settling loads every tree with sable fruitage, are you your own augur, equally as when one single, solitary raven lifts up his hoary blackness from a stone, and sails sullenly off with a croak, croak, croak! that gets fiercer and more savage in the lofty distance? Does the leaf of the forest twinkle futurity? The lonely lichen brighten or pale its lustre with change? Does not the gift of prophecy dwell with the family of the violets and the lilies? And the stately harebells, do they not let droop their closing blossoms when the heavens are niggard of their dews, or uphold them like cups thirsty for wine, when the blessing yet unfelt by duller animal life, is beginning to drop balmily down from the rainy cloud embosomed in the beautiful blue of a midsummer's meridian day?

Gentle reader! forgive these friendly interrogatories. Perhaps you are weather-wiser than ourselves; yet for not a few years we bore the name of "The Man of the Mountains;" and, though no great linguists, we hope that we know somewhat more than the vocabulary of the language both of calm and storm. Remember that we are now at Ambleside—a village familiar with the sky—and one week's residence there may let you into some of the secrets of the unsteady cabinet of St. Cloud.

One advice we give you, and by following it you cannot fail to be happy at Ambleside, and every where else. Whatever the weather be, love, admire, and delight in it, and vow that you would not change it for the atmosphere of a dream. If it be close, hot, and oppressive, be thankful for the air, faint but steady, that comes down from cliff and chasm, or the breeze that gushes fitfully from stream and lake. If the heavens are filled with sunshine, and you feel the vanity of parasols, how cool the sylvan shade, for ever moistened by the murmurs of that fairy waterfall!

Should it blow great guns, cannot you take shelter in yonder magnificent fort, whose hanging battlements are warded even from the thunderbolt, by the dense umbrage of unviolated woods? Rain—rain—rain—an even-down pour of perpetual rain, that forces upon you visions of Noah and his ark, and the top of Mount Ararat—still, we beseech you, be happy. It cannot last long at that rate; the thing is impossible. Even this very afternoon will the rainbow span the blue entrance into Rydal's woody vale, as if to hail the westering sun on his approach to the mountains—and a hundred hill-born torrents will be seen flashing out of the up-folding mists. What a delightful dazzle on the light-stricken river! Each meadow shames the lustre of the emerald; and the soul wishes not for language to speak the pomp and prodigality of colours that Heaven now rejoices to lavish on the grove-girdled Fairfield, that has just tossed off the clouds from his rocky crest.

We hope that we have said enough to show you the gross folly of ever being dissatisfied with Heaven's gracious weather, whatever character it assume. May we now say a very few words on another topic slightly touched in our Hints No. I.—Early Rising? It is manifestly impossible to "rise early in the morning, and lie down late at e'en;" therefore, whenever we hear a lady or a gentleman boasting of having seen the sun rise, we ask them when they went to bed, and bring from them a reluctant answer, "between nine and ten." Now only think of a single lady, or a gentleman, lying "between nine and ten," nightcapped and asnore within dimity curtains in a bed-room in an inn, up many stairs to the back of the house, and with one window commanding a pig-sty, a hen-house, a coal-shed, and a place for a gig, while the rest of the pleasure party, rightly so named, are floating and boating on the bosom of Windermere, while "the star of Jove so beautiful and large" does of his own lustrous self supply the place and power of the moon, when for a little while her effulgence chooseth to disappear within her shady tabernacle! What merit is there in disturbing the whole house by the long-disregarded ringing of drowsy bells, whose clappers wax angrier at

every effort, till the sulky chambermaid, with close-glued eyes, gropes her way along glimmering lanes, and alleys, and lobbies, to female No. 5, whom she wishes in the Red Sea or the bottomless pit? Then the creak of "my walking shoes" goes past every bedroom-door, wakening from sweet sleep—or inspiring dreams of unaccountable hideousness, haunted by the smell of Bamff leather, and tan-pits afloat with the red swollen bodies of cur-dogs, now cured of hydrophobia. Next, the Virgin of the Sun must have a cup of coffee to sip, and a hard-boiled egg to pocket, before she sets out on her orisons; and, finally, she bangs to the great nail-studded oak front-door of the caravansera with such a clap of thunder, that the tongs, poker, and shovel of twenty rooms, dislodged from their upright repose against the polished bar of the grates they adorn, fall down with one clash of ironmongery, and cry "Sleep no more" to all the house!

And this leads us to speak of manners in inns. A little more latitude, unquestionably is to be allowed there than in private houses; but still, readers, be ladies—be gentlemen. This is the land of freedom, and neither landlords nor landladies are slaves. Even waiters, chambermaids, and boots themselves enjoy the blessings of Magna Charta and the Bill of Rights. Swear not at all—it is a brutal habit. Do not, at dinner, ask for a knife, as if you meditated murder; or a spoon, with a face indicative of ipecacuanha. Bawl not for bread, like a famished Stentor, nor, lest you turn it sour, in a voice of thunder for small beer. If he do forget the cheese, be merciful to the waiter for the sake of his wife and a small family; and remember, that although he may upset the mustard-pot, or the vinegar-cruet, still he has a soul to be saved, and that forgiveness should not lag far in the rear of repentance. Roar not like a Cerberus at the charge of threepence a-mile for him or her on the dickey, over and above the five inside; and fall not down in a fit of rage or apoplexy at the sum total of the whole of any bill under heaven.

Then, do not, we implore you, run to the window at every arrival, and stare, squint, goggle, giggle, and glower on each individual descending the steps of various vehicles. Such curiosity is vulgar, and the girdle of Venus would

fail to invest with fascination the waist of a virgin in such an attitude. Be what you always are at home—modest, cheerful, glad, and gay as a May morning; and even in lonesome places there will be eyes, although you know it not, looking on you with pleasure,—and praises of your beauty, and prayers for your happiness, may be breathed as you glide along by some poet of the woods, hidden in his haunted lair of the lady-fern—Yes, “your eyes’ blue lustre, and your golden hair” may shine and wave in a lyrical ballad, ode, or hymn, “one of those strains that shall not die;” for this is the true Arcadia—the land of Pan and Apollo, and the heavenly Nine.

You will not imagine, from any thing we have said, that we are enemies to early rising. Now and then, what purer bliss than to embrace the new-wakened morn, just as she is rising from her dewy bed! At such hour, we feel as if there were neither physical nor moral evil in the world. The united power of peace, innocence, and beauty subdues every thing to itself, and life is love.

Yet we cannot help thinking it somewhat remarkable, that, to the best of our memory, never were we once the very first out into the dewy paradise of the dawn. We say nothing of birds, for they, with their sweet jargon, anticipating the day, and from their bed on the bough feel the forerunning warmth of the sunrise; neither do we allude to hares, for they are “hirplin hame,” to sleep away the light hours, open-eyed, in the briary quarry in the centre of the now trackless wood. Even cows and horses we can excuse being up before us, for they have bivouacked; and the latter, as they often sleep standing, are naturally somnambulists. Weasels, too, we can pardon for running across the road before us, and as they reach the hole-in-the-wall, showing, by their clear eyes, that they have been awake for hours, and have probably breakfasted on leveret. We have no spite at chanticleer, nor the hooting owls against whom he is so lustily crowing hours before the orient; nor do we care although we know that is not the first sudden plunge of the tyrant trout into the insect cloud already hovering over the tarn. But we confess that it is a little mortifying to our pride of time and place, to meet an old beggar

woman, who, from the dust on her tattered brogues, has evidently marched miles from her last night's wayside howf, and who holds out her withered palm for charity, at an hour when a cripple of fourcore might have been supposed sleeping on her pallet of straw. A pedlar, too, who has got through a portion of the excursion before the sun has illumed the mountain tops, is mortifying, with his piled pack and ellwand. There, as we are a Christian, is Ned Hurd, landing a pike on the margin of the Reed-pool, on his way from Hayswater, where he has been all night angling, till his creel is as heavy as a sermon; and a little farther on, lo! comes issuing, like a dryad's daughter, from the gate in the lane, sweet little Alice Elleray, with a basket dangling beneath her arm, going, in her orphan beauty, to gather wild strawberries in the woods!

Sweet orphan of Woodedge! what would many a childless pair give for a creature one half so beautiful as thou, to break the stillness of a home that wants but one blessing to make it perfectly happy! Yet there are few or none to lay a hand on that golden head, or leave a kiss upon its ringlets. The father of Alice Elleray was a wild and reckless youth, and, going to the wars, died in a foreign land. Her mother faded away of a broken heart before she was eighteen;—and who was to care for the orphan child of the forgotten friendless? An old pauper, who lives in that hut, scarcely distinguishable from the shielings of the charcoal-burners, was glad to take her from the parish for a weekly mite that helps to eke out her own subsistence. For two or three years the child was felt a burden by the solitary widow; but ere she had reached her fifth summer, Alice Elleray never left the hut without darkness seeming to overshadow it,—never entered the door without bringing the sunshine. Where can the small, lonely creature have heard so many tunes, and airs, and snatches of old songs, as if some fairy bird had taught her melodies of fairy-land? She is now in her tenth year, nor an idler in her solitude. Do you wish for a flowery bracelet for the neck of a chosen one, whose perfumes may mingle with the bosom-balm of her virgin beauty? The orphan of Woodedge will wreathe it of blossoms cropt before

the sun hath melted the dew on leaf or petal. Will you be for carrying away with you to the far-off eity some pretty little sylvan toy, to remind you of Ambleside and Rydal, and other beautiful names of beautiful localities near the lucid waters of Windermere? Then, lady! purchase, at little cost, from the fair basket-maker, an ornament for your parlour, that will not disgrace its fanciful furniture; and, as you sit at your dreamy needle-work, will recall the green forest-glades of Brathay or Calgarth. Industrious creature! each day is to thee, in thy simplicity, an entire life! All thoughts, all feelings, arise and die in peace between sunrise and sunset. What carest thou for being an orphan; knowing, as thou well dost, that God is thy father and thy mother, and that a prayer to Him brings health, food, and sleep to the innocent!

Letting drop a curtsey, taught by Nature the mother of the Graces, Alice Elleray, the orphan of Woodedge, without waiting to be twice bidden, trills, as if from a silver pipe, a wild, birdlike warble, that in its cheerfulness has now and then a melancholy fall, and, at the close of the song, hers are the only eyes that are not dimmed with the haze of tears! Then away she glides with a thankful smile, and dancing over the greensward, like an uncertain sunbeam, lays the treasure, won by her beauty, her skill, and her industry, on the lap of her old guardian, who blesses her with the uplifting of withered hands!

You are now all standing together in a group beside Ivy Cottage, the river gliding below its wooden bridge from Rydalmer. It is a perfect model of such architecture, breathing the very spirit of Westmoreland and Wordsworth. The public road, skirted by its front paling, does not in the least degree injure its character of privacy and retirement. So we think at this dewy hour of prime, when the gossamer meets our faces, extended from the honeysuckled slate-porch to the trees on the other side of the turnpike. And see, how the multitude of low-hanging roofs, and gable ends, and dove cot-looking windows, steal away up a green and shrubberied acclivity, and terminating in wooded rocks that seem part of the building, in the uniting richness of ivy, lichens, moss-roses, broom, and sweet-briar, murmuring with birds and

bees, busy near hive and nest!—It would be extremely pleasant to breakfast in that wide-windowed room on the ground-floor, on cream and barley-cakes, eggs, coffee, and dry toast, with a little mutton-ham not too severely salted, and, at the conclusion, a nutshell of Glenlivet or Cogniac. But, Lord preserve ye! it is not yet four o'clock in the morning; and what Christian kettle simmereth before seven?—Yes, my sweet Harriet, that sketch does you credit, and is far from being very unlike the original. Rather too many chimneys by about half-a-dozen; and where did you find that steeple immediately over the window marked “Dairy?” The pigs are somewhat too sumptuously lodged in that elegant sty, and the hen-roost might accommodate a phoenix. But the features of the chief porch are very happily hit off,—you have caught the very attic spirit of the roof,—and some of the windows may be justly said to be staring likenesses.—Ivy Cottage is slipped into our portfolio, and we shall compare it, on our return to Scotland, with Buchanan Lodge.

We cannot patronise the practice of walking in large parties of ten or a score, ram-stam and helter-skelter on to the front-green or gravel-walk of any private nobleman or gentleman's house, to enjoy from a commanding station, an extensive or picturesque view of the circumjacent country. It is too much in the style of the free and easy. The family within, sitting perhaps at dinner with the windows open, or sewing in a cool dishabille, cannot like to be stared in upon by the corners of so many curious and inquisitive eyes all a-hunt for prospects; nor were these rose-bushes planted there for public use, nor that cherry-tree in vain netted against the blackbirds. Not but that a party may now and then excusably enough pretend to lose their way in a strange country; and looking around them, in well-assumed bewilderment, bow hesitatingly and respectfully to maid or matron at door or window, and, with a thousand apologies, lingeringly offer to retire by the avenue gate, on the other side of the spacious lawn, that terracc-like hangs over vale, lake, and river. But to avoid all possible imputation of impertinence, follow you our example, and make all such incursions by break of day. We hold, that, for a couple of hours after sunrise,

all the earth is common property. Nobody surely would think for a moment of looking black on any number of freebooting lakers coming full sail up the avenue, right against the front at four o'clock in the morning? At that hour, even the poet would grant them the privilege of the harbour where he sits when inspired, and writing for immortality. He feels conscious that he ought to have been in bed; and hastens, on such occasions, to apologize for his intrusion on strangers availing themselves of the rights and privileges of the dawn.

Leaving Ivy Cottage, then, and its yet unbreathing chimneys, turn in at the first gate to your right, (if it be not built up, in which case leap the wall,) and find your way the best you can through among old pollarded and ivied ash-trees, intermingled with yews, and over knolly ground, briar-woven, and here and there whitened with the jagged thorn, till you reach, through a slate-stile a wide gravel walk, shaded by pine-trees, and open on the one side to an orchard. Proceed—and little more than a hundred steps will land you on the front of Rydal Hall, the house of the great Poet of the Lakes. Mr. Wordsworth is not at home, but away to cloud-land in his little boat so like the crescent moon. But do not by too much eloquence, awaken the family, or scare the silence, or frighten “the innocent brightness of the new-born day.” We hate all sentimentalism; but we bid you in his own beautiful language,

“With gentle hand
Touch, for there is a spirit in the leaves!”

From a platform of singular beauty you see a blue gleam of Windermere over the grove-tops—close at hand are Rydal Hall and its ancient woods—right opposite the Loughrigg Fells, ferny, rocky and sylvan, but the chief breadth of breast pastoral—and to the right Rydalmere, seen and scarcely seen through embowering trees, and mountain-masses bathed in the morning-light, and the white-wreathed mists for a little while longer shrouding their summits. A lately erected private chapel lifts its little tower from below, surrounded by a green, on which there are yet no graves—nor do we know if it be intend-

ed for a place of burial. A few houses are sleeping beyond the chapel by the river side; and the people beginning to set them in order, here and there a pillar of smoke ascends into the air, giving cheerfulness and animation to the scene.

Finding your way back as you choose to Ivy Cottage, cross the wooden bridge, and walk along the western shore of Rydalmere. Hence you see the mountains in magnificent composition, and craggy coppices, with intervening green fields shelving down to the lake margin. It is a small lake, not much more than a mile round, and of a very peculiar character. One cottage only, as far as we remember, peeps on its shore from a grove of sycamores, a statesman's pleasant dwelling; and there are the ruins of another on a slope near the upper end, the circle of the garden still visible. Every thing has a quiet but wildish pastoral and sylvan look, and the bleating of sheep fills the hollow of the hills. The lake has a reedy inlet and outlet, and the angler thinks of pike when he looks upon such harbours. There is a single boat-house, where the lady of the hall has a padlocked and painted barge for pleasure parties; and the heronry on the high pine-trees of the only island connects the scene with the ancient park of Rydal, whose oak-woods, though thinned and decayed, still preserve the majestic and venerable character of antiquity and baronial state.

Having taken a lingering farewell of Rydalmere, and of the new chapel-tower, that seems among the groves already to be an antique, you may either sink down to the stream that flows out of Grassmere and connects the two lakes, crossing a wooden bridge, and then joining the beautiful new road that sweeps along to the village, or you may keep up on the face of the hill, and by a terrace-path reach the Loughrigg road, a few hundred yards above Tail-end, a pretty cottage ornée, which you will observe crowning a wooded eminence, and looking cheerfully abroad over all the vale. There is one mount in particular, whence you see to advantage the delightful panorama—encircling mountains—Grassmere Lake far down below your feet, with its one green pastoral isle, sylvan shores, and emerald meadows,—huts and houses

sprinkled up and down in all directions,—the village partly embowered in groves, and partly open below the shadow of large single trees—and the church-tower—almost always a fine feature in the scenery of the north of England—standing in stately simplicity among the clustering tenements, nor dwindled even by the great height of the hills. The vale of Grassmere is thus exquisitely painted by the poet Gray ; and although the picture is taken from a different station from that you now occupy, (from a point on yonder long, steep, winding road, that leads by Dunmilraise into the county of Cumberland,) yet you cannot fail instantly to recognise the features “ of this little unsuspected paradise.” Time, too, has wrought some changes here, not altogether for the better ; but overlook any “ staring gentleman’s house” that may offend your eye, and build your own edifices in your own Arcadia.

“ The bosom of the mountains, spreading here into a broad basin, discovers in the midst Grassmere water ; its margin is hollowed into small bays, with eminences, some of rock, some of soft turf, that half conceal and vary the figure of the little lake they command : from the shore, a low promontory pushes itself far into the water, and on it stands a white village, with a parish church rising in the midst of it ; hanging enclosures, corn-fields, and meadows, green as an emerald, with their trees and hedges, and cattle, fill up the whole space from the edge of the water ; and just opposite to you is a large farm-house, at the bottom of a steep smooth lawn, embosomed in old woods, which climb half way up the mountain-sides, and discover above a broken line of crags that crown the scene. Not a single red tile, no staring gentleman’s house, breaks in upon the repose of this unsuspected paradise ; but all is peace, rusticity, and happy poverty, in its sweetest, most becoming attire.”

It is pleasant to lose sight entirely of a beautiful scene, and to plod along, in almost objectless shadow, within a few hundred yards of Paradise. Our conceptions and feelings are bright and strong, from the nearness of their objects, yet the dream is somewhat different from the reality. All at once, at a turning of the road, the splendour

reappears, like an unfurled banner, and the heart leaps in the joy of the senses. This sort of enjoyment comes upon you frequently before you reach the village of Grassmere from the point of vision above described, and a stranger sometimes is apt to doubt if it be really the same lake—that one island, and these few promontories, shifting into such varied combinations with the varying mountain-ridges and ranges, that show top over top in bewildering succession, and give hints of other valleys beyond, and of tarns, rarely visited, among the moorland wastes. A single long dim shadow, falling across the water, alters the whole physiognomy of the scene—nor less a single bright streak of sunshine, brightening up some feature formerly hidden, and giving animation and expression to the whole face of the lake.

About a short mile from the village inn, you will pass by, without seeing it—unless warned not to do so—one of the most singularly beautiful human habitations in the world. It belongs to a gentleman of the name of Barber, and, we believe, has been almost entirely built by him—the original hut, on which his taste has worked, having been a mere shell. The spirit of the place seems to us to be that of shadowy silence. Its bounds are small; but it is an indivisible part of a hill-side so sweet and sylvan, that it ought to be the haunt of the roc. You hear the tinkle of a rill, invisible among the hazels—a bird sings or flutters—a bee hums his way through the bewildering wood—but no louder sound. Some fine old forest-trees extend widely their cool and glimmering shade, and a few stumps or armless trunks, whose bulk is increased by a load of ivy that hides the hollow wherein the owls have their domicile, give an air of antiquity to the spot, that, but for other accompaniments, would almost be melancholy. As it is, the scene has a pensive character. As yet you have seen no house, and wonder whither the gravel-walks are to conduct you, winding fancifully and fantastically (for altogether you might think yourself in fairy land) through the smooth-shaven lawn, bestrewed by a few large leaves of the horse-chesnut or sycamore. But lo! clustered verandas, where the nightingale might woo the rose, and lattice-windows reaching from caves

to ground-sill, so sheltered that they might stand open in storm and rain, and tall circular chimneys, shaped almost like the stems of the trees that overshadow the roof irregular, and over all a gleam of blue sky and a few motionless clouds! The noisy world ceases to be, and the tranquil heart, delighted with the sweet seclusion, breathes, "Oh! that this were my cell, and that I were a hermit!"

But you soon see that the proprietor of this paradise is not a hermit; for every where you discern unostentatious traces of that elegance and refinement that belong to social and cultivated life; nothing rude and rough-hewn, yet nothing prim and precise. Snails and spiders are taught to keep their own places; and among the flowers of that hanging garden on a sunny slope, not a weed is to be seen, for weeds are beautiful only by the wayside, in the matting of hedge-roots, by the mossy stone, and the brink of the well in the brae—and are offensive only when they intrude into society above their own rank, and where they have the air and accent of aliens. By pretty pebbled steps of stairs you mount up from platform to platform of the sloping woodland banks—the prospect widening as you ascend, till from a bridge that spans a leaping rivulet, you behold in full beauty all Grassmere Vale, village, church-tower, and lake, the whole of the mountains, and a noble arch of sky, the circumference of that little world of peace.

Circumscribed as are the boundaries of this place, yet the grounds are so artfully, while one thinks so artlessly, laid out, that, wandering through their labyrinthine recesses, you might believe yourself in an extensive wilderness. Here you come out upon a green open glade—(you see by the sun-dial it is past six o'clock)—there the arms of an immense tree overshadow what is in itself a scene—yonder you have an alley that serpentizes into gloom and obscurity—and from that cliff you doubtless would see over the tree-tops into the outer and airy world. With all its natural beauties is intermingled an agreeable quaintness, that shows the owner has occasionally been working in the spirit of fancy, almost caprice; the tool-house in the garden is not without its ornaments—the barn seems habitable, and the byre has

somewhat the appearance of a church. You see at once that the man who lives here, instead of being sick of the world, is attached to all elegant socialities and amities; that he uses silver cups instead of maple bowls, shows his scallop-shell among other curiosities in his cabinet—and will treat the passing pilgrim with pure water from the spring, if he insists upon that beverage, but will first offer him a glass of the yellow cowslip-wine, the cooling claret, or the sparkling champagne.

Perhaps you are all beginning to get a little hungry, but it is too soon to breakfast, so leaving the village of Grassmere on the right, keep your eye on Helm-crag, and so find your way up Easdale. Easdale is an arm of the Lake of Grassmere, and in the words of Mr. Green the artist, "it is in places profusely wooded, and charmingly sequestered among the mountains." Here you may hunt the waterfalls, in rainy weather easily run down, but difficult of detection in a drought. Many pretty rustic bridges cross and recross the main stream and its tributaries; the cottages in nook, and on hillside, are among the most picturesque and engaging in the whole country; the vale widens into spacious and noble meadow-grounds, on which might suitably stand the mansion of any nobleman in England—as you are near its head, every thing gets wild and broken, with a slight touch of dreariness, and by no very difficult ascent along a narrow glen, you may reach Easdale Tarn in little more than an hour's close walking from Grassmere—a lonely and impressive scene, and the haunt of the angler almost as frequently as of the shepherd.

Gentle reader! how far can you enjoy the beauty of external nature under a sharp appetite for breakfast or dinner? On our imagination the effect of hunger is somewhat singular. We no longer regard sheep, for instance, as the fleecy or the bleating flock. Their wool or their baaing is nothing to us—we think of necks, and jigots, and saddles of mutton, and even the lamb frisking on the sunny bank, is eaten by us in the shape of steaks and fry. If it is in the morning, we see no part of the cow but her udder, distilling richest milkiness. Instead of ascending to heaven on the smoke of a cottage chimney,

we put our arms round the column, and descend on the lid of the great pan that contains the family-breakfast. Every interesting object in the landscape seems edible—our mouth waters all over the vale—as the village clock tolls eight, we involuntarily say grace, and Price on the Picturesque gives way to Meg Dods's Cookery.

Mrs. Bell, of the Red-Lion Inn, Grassmere, can give a breakfast with any woman in England. She bakes incomparable bread—firm, close, compact, and white, thin-crust and admirably raised. Her yeast always works well. What butter! Before it a primrose must hide its unyellowed head. Then, jam of the finest quality, goose, rasp, and strawberry! and as the jam is, so are her jellies. Hens cackle that the eggs are fresh—and these shrimps were scraping the sand last night in the Whitehaven sea. What glorious bannocks of barley-meal! Wheaten cakes, too, no thicker than a wafer, and crisp as a cockney's dream! Do not, my good sir, appropriate that cut of pickled salmon; it is heavier than it looks, and will weigh about four pounds. One might live a thousand years, yet never weary of such mutton-ham! Virgin-honey indeed. Let us hope that the bees were not smothered, but by some gracious disciple of Bonar or Huber decoyed from a full hive into an empty one, with the summer and autumn before them to build and saturate their new comb-palace. No bad thing is—a cold pigeon-pie, especially of cushats. To hear them cooing in the centre of a wood is one thing, and to see them lying at the bottom of a pie is another—which is the better, depends entirely on time, place, and circumstance. Well, a beef-steak at breakfast is rather startling—but let us try a bit with these fine ingenuous youthful potatoes, from a light sandy soil on a warm slope. Next to the country clergy, smugglers are the most spiritual of characters; and we verily believe that to be "sma' still." Our dear sir—you are in orders, we believe—will you have the goodness to return thanks—yes, ring for the bill—moderate indeed. With a day's work before one, there is nothing on earth like the strong basis of a breakfast.

It is yet only ten o'clock—and what a multitude of thoughts and feelings, sights and sounds, lights and sha-

dows, have been ours since sunrise! Had we been in bed, all would have remained unfelt and unknown. But to be sure one dream might have been worth them all. Dreams, however, when they are over, are gone, be they of bliss or bale, heaven or the shades. No one weeps over a dream. With such tears no one would sympathize. Give us reality, "the sober certainty of waking bliss," and to it memory shall cling. Let the object of our sorrow belong to the living world, and transient though it be, its power may be immortal, and with us even in our dying hour. Away then, as of little worth, all the unsubstantial and wavering world of dreams, and in their place give us the very humblest humanities, enjoyed—if it may be—in some beautiful scene of nature, where all is steadfast but the clouds, whose very being is change, and the flow of waters that have been in motion since the flood.

Ha! a splendid equipage with a coronet! and out steps, handed by her elated husband, a high-born, beautiful, and graceful bride. They are making a tour of the Lakes, and the honeymoon hath not yet filled her horns. If there be indeed such a thing as happiness on this earth, here it is—youth, elegance, health, rank, riches, and love—all united in ties that death alone can sunder. How they hang towards each other, the blissful pair! blind in their passion to all the scenery they came to admire, or beholding it but by fits and snatches, with eyes that can see only one object of mutual adoration. She hath already learnt to forget father and mother, and sister and brother, and all the young creatures like herself—every one—that shared the pastimes and the confidence of her virgin youth-head. With her as with Genevieve—

All thoughts, all passions, all delights,
Whatever stirs this mortal frame,
All are but ministers of love,
And feed his sacred flame!

And will this holy state of the spirit endure? No—it will fade, and fade, and fade away, sunset after sunset, so imperceptibly, so unconsciously, (so like the shortening

of the long summer days that lose minute after minute of the light, till again we hear the yellow leaves are rustling in autumnal evening,) that the heart within that snow-drifted bosom will know not how great has been the change, till all of a sudden, it shall be told the truth, and with a shiver of despairing agony, feel that all mortal emotion, however paradisiacal, is nothing but the shadow of a dream !

Fain would we believe that forebodings like these are, on all such occasions, whispered by a blind and ignorant misanthropy, and that even of wedded life it may generally be said,

“O, happy state, where souls together draw,
Where love is liberty, and nature law.”

What profound powers of affection, grief, pity, sympathy, delight, religion, and love, belong, by its constitution, to the frame of every human soul ! And if the sources of life have not greatly thwarted the divine dispensation of nature, will they not all rise into genial play within bosoms consecrated to each other's happiness, till comes between them the cold hand of death ? It would seem that every thing fair and good must flourish under that holy necessity—every thing foul and bad fade away ; and that no quarrel or unkindness would ever be between pilgrims travelling together through time to eternity, whether their path lead through an Eden or a waste. Habit itself comes with humble hearts to the gracious and benign ; they who have once loved, will not, for that very reason, cease to love ; memory shall brighten when hope decays ; and if the present be not now so blissful, so thrilling, so steeped in rapture as it was in the golden prime, yet shall it without repining suffice to them whose thoughts borrow unconsciously sweet comforts from the past and future, and have been taught by mutual cares and sorrows to indulge tempered expectations of the best earthly felicity. And is it not so ? How much tranquillity and contentment in human homes ! Calm onflowings of life shaded in domestic privacy, and seen but at times coming out into the open light ! What brave patience

under poverty! What beautiful resignation in grief! Riches take wings to themselves and flee away—yet without and within the door there is the decency of a changed, not an unhappy lot—the clouds of adversity darkens men's characters even as if they were the shadows of dishonour, but conscience quails not in the gloom—the well out of which humility hath her daily drink, is nearly dried up to the very spring, but she upbraideth not heaven—children, those flowers that make the hovel's earthen floor delightful as the glades of Paradise, wither in a day, but there is holy comfort in the mother's tears, nor are the groans of the father altogether without relief—for they have gone whither they came, and are blooming now in the bowers of heaven!

Reverse the picture—and tremble for the fate of those whom God hath made one, and whom no man must put asunder. In common natures, what hot and sensual passions, whose gratification ends in indifference, disgust, loathing, or hatred!—what a power of misery, from fretting to madness, lies in that mean but mighty word—temper! The face, to whose meek beauty smiles seemed native during the days of virgin love, shows now but a sneer, a scowl, a frown, or a glare of scorn. The shape of those features are still fine—the eye of the gazelle—the Grecian nose and forehead—the ivory teeth, so small and regular—and thin line of ruby lips breathing Circassian luxury—the snow-drifts of the bosom still heave there—a lovelier waist Apollo never encircled stepping from the chariot of the sun—nor limbs more graceful did ever Dian veil beneath the shadows of Mount Latmos. But she is a fiend—a devil incarnate, and the sovereign beauty of ten counties has made your house a hell!

But suppose that you have had the sense and sagacity to marry a homely wife—or one comely, at the best—nay, even that you have sought to secure your peace by admitted ugliness—or wedded a woman whom all tongues call—plain; then may an insurance-ticket, indeed, flame like the sun in miniature on the front of your house—but what joint-stock company can undertake to repay the loss incurred by the perpetual singeing of the smouldering flames of strife, that blaze up without warning at bed

and board, and keep you in an everlasting alarm of fire? We defy you to utter the most glaring truth, that shall not be instantly contradicted. The most rational proposals for a day or hour of pleasure, at home or abroad, are on the nail negatived as absurd. If you dine at home every day for a month, she wonders why nobody asks you out, and fears you take no trouble to make yourself agreeable. If you dine from home one day in a month, then you are charged with being addicted to tavern-clubs. Children are perpetual bones of contention—there is hatred and sorrow in house-bills—rent and taxes are productive of endless grievances—and although education be an excellent thing—indeed quite a fortune in itself—especially to a poor Scotchman going to England, where all the people are barbarous—yet it is irritatingly expensive, when a great northern nursery sends out its hordes, and gawky hoydens and hobblethoys are getting themselves accomplished in the foreign languages, music, drawing, geography, the use of the globes, and the dumb-bells.

“Let observation, with extensive view,
Survey mankind from China to Peru”

(Two bad lines, by the way, though written by Dr. Johnson)—and observation will find the literature of all countries filled with sarcasms against the marriage-life. Our old Scottish songs and ballads especially, delight in representing it as a state of ludicrous misery and discomfort. There is little or no talk of horns—the dilemma of English wit—but every individual moment of every individual minute, of every individual hour of every individual day, and so on, has its peculiar, appropriate, characteristic, and incurable wretchedness. Yet the delightful thing is, that in spite of all this jeering, and jibing, and grinning, and hissing, and pointing with the finger,—marrying, and giving in marriage, births and christenings, continue their career of prosperity; and the legitimate population doubles itself somewhere about every thirty-five years. Single houses rise out of the earth—double houses become villages—villages towns—towns cities—and our metropolis is itself a world!

While the lyrical poetry of Scotland is thus rife with reproach against wedlock, it is equally rife with panegyric on the tender passion that leads into its toils. In one page you shudder in a cold sweat over the mean miseries of the poor "gudeman;" in the next you see, unconscious of the same approaching destiny, the enamoured youth lying on his Mary's bosom, beneath the milk-white thorn. The pastoral pipe is tuned under a fate that hurries on all living creatures to love; and not one lawful embrace is shunned from any other fears, than those which of themselves spring up in the poor man's thoughtful heart. The wicked betray, and the weak fall—bitter tears are shed at midnight from eyes once bright as the day—fair faces never smile again, and many a hut has its broken heart—hope comes and goes, finally vanquishing, or yielding to despair—crowned passion dies the sated death, or, with increase of appetite grows by what it feeds on—wide, but unseen, over all the regions of the land, are cheated hopes—vain desires—gnawing jealousy—dispirited fear, and swarthy-souled revenge—beseechings, seductions, suicides, and insanities—and all, all spring from the root of love—yet all the nations of the earth call the tree blest, and long as time endures will continue to flock thither, panting to devour the fruitage, of which every other golden globe is poison and death.

Smile away then with all thy most irresistible blandishments, thou young and happy bride! What business have we to prophesy bedimming tears to those resplendent eyes? Or that the talisman of that witching smile can ever lose its magic? Are not the high-born daughters of England also the high-souled? And hath not honour and virtue, and charity and religion, guarded for centuries the lofty line of thy pure and unpolluted blood? Joyful, therefore, mayest thou be, as the dove in the sunshine on the tower-top—and, as the dove serene, when she sitteth on her nest within the yew-tree's gloom, far within the wood!

Passing from our episode, let us say that we are too well acquainted with your taste, feeling, and judgment, gentle readers, to tell you in these our humble Hints on what objects to gaze or glance, in such a scene as the

vale and village of Grassmere. Of yourselves you will find out the nooks and corners from which the pretty whitewashed and flowering cottages do most picturesquely combine with each other, and with the hills, and groves, and old church-tower. Without our guiding hand will you ascend knoll and eminence, be there pathway or no pathway, and discover for yourselves new lake-landscapes. Led by your own sweet and idle, chaste and noble fancies, you will disappear, single or in pairs and parties, into little woody wildernesses, where you will see nothing but ground-flowers and a glimmering contiguity of shade. Solitude sometimes, you know, is best society, and short separation urges sweet return. Various travels or voyages of discovery may be undertaken, and their grand object attained in little more than an hour. The sudden whirr of a cushat is an incident, or the leaping of a lamb among the broom. In the quiet of nature, matchless seems the music of the milkmaid's song—and of the hearty laugh of the haymakers, crossing the meadows in rows, how sweet the cheerful echo from Helm-crag! Grassmere appears by far the most beautiful place in all the Lake-county. You buy a field—build a cottage—and in imagination lie (for they are too short to enable you to sit) beneath the shadow of your own trees!

In an English village—highland or lowland—seldom is there any spot so beautiful as the churchyard! That of Grassmere is especially so, with the pensive shadows of the old church-tower settling over its cheerful graves. Ay, its cheerful graves! Startle not at the word as too strong—for the pigeons are cooing in the belfry, the stream is murmuring round the mossy churchyard wall, a few lambs are lying on the mounds, and flowers laughing in the sunshine over the cells of the dead. But hark! the bell tolls—one—one—one—a funeral knell, speaking not of time, but of eternity! To-day there is to be a burial—and lo! close to the wall of the tower, the new-dug grave!

Hush! The sound of singing voices in yonder wood, deadened by the weight of umbrage! Now it issues forth into the clear air, a most dirge-like hymn! All is silence—but that pause speaks of death. Again the melancholy

swell ascends the sky—and then comes slowly along the funeral procession, the coffin born aloft, and the mourners all in white, for it is a virgin who is carried to her last home! Let every head be reverently uncovered, while the psalm enters the gate, and the bier is borne for holy rites along the chancel of the church, and laid down close to the altar. A smothered sobbing disturbeth not the service—'tis a human spirit, breathing in accordance with the divine! Mortals weeping for the immortal! Earth's passions cleaving to one who is now in heaven!

Was she one flower of many, and singled out by death's unsparing finger from a wreath of beauty, whose remaining blossoms seem now to have lost all their fragrance and all their brightness? Or was she the sole delight of her gray-haired parents' eyes, and is the voice of joy extinguished in their low-roofed home for ever? Had her loveliness been beloved, and had her innocent hopes anticipated the bridal day, nor her heart, whose beatings were numbered, ever feared that narrow bed? All that we know is her name and age—you see them glittering on her coffin—"Anabella Irvine, aged xix years!"

The day seems something dim, now that we are all on our way back to Ambleside; and although the clouds are neither heavier nor more numerous than before, somehow or other the sun is a little obscured. We must not indulge too long in a mournful mood—for these are our holidays and our Hints for Holidays—yet let us all sit down under the shadow of this grove of sycamores, that overshadows a bay of Rydalmere, and listen to another Tale of Tears.

Many a tame tradition, embalmed in a few pathetic verses, lives for ages, while the memory of the most affecting incidents, to which genius has allied no general emotion, fades like the mist, and leaves heart-rending griefs undeplorable. Elegies and dirges might indeed have well been sung amidst the green ruins of yonder cottage, that looks now almost like a fallen wall—at best, the remnants of a cattle-shed shaken down by the storm. Twenty years ago—how short a time in national history—how long in that of private sorrows! all tongues were speaking of the death that there befell, and to have seen the weep-

ing, you would have thought that the funeral could never have been forgotten. But stop now the shepherd on the hill, and ask him who lived of old in that nook, and chance is he knows not even their name, much less the story of their afflictions. That farm-house was inhabited by Allan Fleming, his wife, and an only child, known familiarly in her own small world, by the name of Lucy of the Fold. In almost every vale among the mountains, there is its peculiar pride—some one creature to whom nature has been especially kind, and whose personal beauty, sweetness of disposition, and felt superiority of mind and manner, single her out, unconsciously, as an object of attraction and praise, making her the May-day Queen of the unending year. Such a darling was Lucy Fleming ere she had finished her thirteenth year; and strangers, who had heard tell of her loveliness, often dropt in as if by accident, to see the Beauty of Rydalmere. Her parents rejoiced in their child; nor was there any reason why they should dislike the expression of delight and wonder with which so many regarded her. Shy was she as a woodland bird, but as fond of her nest too; and when there was nothing near to disturb, her life was almost a perpetual hymn. From joy to sadness, and from sadness to joy; from silence to song, and from song to silence; from stillness like that of the butterfly on the flower, to motion like that of the same creature wavering in the sunshine over the wood-top, was to Lucy as welcome a change as the change of lights and shadows, breezes and calms, in the mountain-country of her birth.

One summer day, a youthful stranger appeared at the door of the house, and after an hour's stay, during which Lucy was from home, asked if they would let him have lodging with them for a few months—a single room for bed and books, and that he would take his meals with the family. Enthusiastic boy! to him poetry had been the light of life, nor did ever hero of poetry belong more entirely than he to the world of imagination! He had come into the free mountain-region from the confinement of college-walls, and his spirit was expanded within him like a rainbow. No eyes had he for realities—all nature was seen in the light of fancy—not a single object at sunrise

and sunset the same. All was beautiful within the circle of the green hill-tops, whether shrouded in the soft mists, or clearly outlined in a cloudless sky. Home, friends, colleges, cities,—all sunk away into oblivion, and Harry Howard felt as if wafted off on the wings of a spirit, and set down in a land beyond the sea, foreign to all he had before experienced, yet in its perfect and endless beauty appealing every hour more tenderly and strongly to a spirit awakened to a new power, and revelling in new emotion. In that cottage he took up his abode. In a few weeks came a library of books in all languages; and there was much wondering talk over all the country-side about the mysterious young stranger who now lived at the Fold.

Every day, and, when he chose to absent himself from his haunts among the hills, every hour was Lucy before the young poet's eyes—and every hour did her beauty wax more beautiful in his imagination. Who Mr. Howard was, or even if that were indeed his real name, no one knew; but none doubted that he was of gentle birth, and all with whom he had ever conversed in his elegant amenity, could have sworn that a youth so bland and free, and with such a voice, and such eyes, would not have injured the humblest of God's creatures, much less such a creature as Lucy of the Fold. It was indeed even so—for, before the long summer days were gone, he who had never had a sister, loved her even as if she had slept on the same maternal bosom. Father or mother he now had none—indeed, scarcely one near relation—although he was rich in this world's riches, but in them poor in comparison with the noble endowments that nature had lavished upon his mind. His guardians took little heed of the splendid but wayward youth—and knew not now whither his fancies had carried him, were it even to some savage land. Thus, the Fold became to him the one dearest roof under the roof of heaven. All the simple on-goings of that humble home, love and imagination beautified into poetry; and all the rough or coarser edges of lowly life, were softened away in the light of genius that transmuted every thing on which it fell; while all the silent intimations which nature gave there of her primal sympathies, in the hut

as fine and forceful as in the hall, showed to his excited spirit pre-eminently beautiful, and chained it to the hearth around which was read the morning and the evening prayer.

What wild schemes does not love imagine, and in the face of very impossibility achieve! "I will take Lucy to myself, if it should be in place of all the world. I will myself breathe light over her being, till in a new spring it shall be adorned with living flowers that fade not away, perennial and self-renewed. In a few years the bright, docile creature shall have the soul of a very angel—and then, before God, and at his holy altar mine shall she become for ever—here and hereafter—in this paradise of earth, and if more celestial be, in the paradise of heaven."

Thus two summers and two winters wheeled away into the past; and in the change, imperceptible from day to day, but glorious at last, wrought on Lucy's nature by communication with one so prodigally endowed, scarcely could her parents believe it was their same child, except that she was dutiful as before, as affectionate, and as fond of all the familiar objects, dead or living, round and about her birthplace. She had now grown to woman's stature—tall, though she scarcely seemed so, except when among her playmates; and in her maturing loveliness, fulfilling, and far more than fulfilling, the fair promise of her childhood. Never once had the young stranger—stranger no more—spoken to daughter, father, or mother, of his love. Indeed, for all that he felt towards Lucy, there must have been some other word than love. Tenderness, which was almost pity—an affection that was often sad—wonder at her surpassing beauty, nor less at her unconsciousness of its power—admiration of her spiritual qualities, that ever rose up to meet instruction as if already formed—and that heart-throbbing that stirs the blood of youth when the innocent eyes it loves are beaming in the twilight through smiles or through tears,—these, and a thousand other feelings, and above all, the creative faculty of a poet's soul, now constituted his very being when Lucy was in presence, nor forsook him when he was alone among the mountains.

At last it was known through the country that Mr.

Howard—the stranger, the scholar, the poet, the elegant gentleman, of whom nobody knew much, but whom every body loved, and whose father must at the least have been a lord, was going—in a year or less—to marry the daughter of Allan Fleming—Lucy of the Fold. Oh grief and shame to the parents—if still living—of the noble boy! O sorrow for himself when his passion dies—when the dream is dissolved—and when, in place of the angel of light who now moves before him, he sees only a child of earth, lowly-born, and long rudely bred, a being only fair as many others are fair, sister in her simplicity to maidens no less pleasing than she, and partaking of many weaknesses, frailties, and faults now unknown to herself in her happiness, and to him in his love! Was there no one to rescue them from such a fate—from a few months of imaginary bliss, and from many years of real bale! How could such a man as Allan Fleming be so infatuated as sell his child to fickle youth, who would soon desert her broken-hearted! Yet kind thoughts, wishes, hopes, and beliefs prevailed, nor were there wanting stories of the olden time, of low-born maidens married to youths of high estate, and raised from hut to hall, becoming mothers of a lordly line of sons, that were counsellors to kings and princes.

In spring, Mr. Howard went away for a few months—it was said to the great city of London—and on his return at midsummer, Lucy was to be his bride. They parted with a few peaceful tears, and though absent were still together. And now a letter came to the Fold, saying that before another Sabbath he would be at the Fold. A few beautiful fields in Easdale, long mortgaged beyond their fee-simple by the hard-working statesman from whom they reluctantly were passing away, had meanwhile been purchased by Mr. Howard, and in that cottage they were to abide, till they had built for themselves a house a little farther up the side of the sylvan hill, below the shadow of Helm Crag. Lucy saw the Sabbath of his return and its golden sun, but it was in her mind's eye only, for ere it was to descend behind the hills, she was not to be among the number of living things.

Up Forest-Ullswater the youth had come by the light

of the setting sun; and as he crossed the mountains to Grassmere by the majestic pass of the Solitary Hawse, still as every new star arose in heaven, with it arose as lustrous a new emotion from the bosom of his betrothed. The midnight hour had been fixed for his return to the Fold, and as he reached the cliffs above Whitemoss, lo! according to agreement, a light was burning in the low window, the very planet of love. It seemed to shed a bright serenity over all the vale, and the moon-glittering waters of Rydalmere were as an image of life, pure, lonely, undisturbed, and at the pensive hour how profound! "Blessing and praise be to the gracious God! who framed my spirit so to delight in his beautiful and glorious creation—blessing and praise to the Holy One for the boon of my Mary's innocent and religious love!" Prayers crowded fast into his soul, and tears of joy fell from his eyes, as he stood at the threshold, almost afraid in the trembling of life-deep affection to meet her first embrace!

In the silence, sobs and sighs, and one or two long deep groans! Then in another moment, he saw through the open door of the room where Mary used to sleep, several figures moving to and fro in the light, and one figure upon its knees—who else could it be but her father! Unnoticed he became one of the pale-faced company—and there he beheld her on her bed, mute and motionless, her face covered with a deplorable beauty—eyes closed, and her hands clasped upon her breast! "Dead, dead, dead!" muttered in his ringing ears a voice from the tombs, and he fell down in the midst of them with great violence upon the floor.

Encircled with arms that lay round him softer and silkier far than flower-wreaths on the neck of a child who has laid him down from play, was he when he awoke from that fit—lying even on his own maiden's bed, and within her very bosom, that beat yet, although soon about to beat no more! At that blest awakening moment, he might have thought he saw the first glimpse of light of the morning after his marriage-day, for her face was turned towards his heart, and, with her faint breathings, he felt the touch of tears. Not tears alone now bedimmed

those eyes, for tears he could have kissed away, but the blue lids were heavy with something that was not slumber—the orbs themselves were scarcely visible—and her voice—it was gone, to be heard never again, till in the choir of white-robed spirits, that sing at the right hand of God !

Yet, no one doubted that she knew him—him who had dropt down, like a superior being, from another sphere, on the innocence of her simple childhood—had taught her to know so much of her own soul—to love her parents with a profounder and more holy love—to see, in characters more divine, Heaven's promises of forgiveness to every contrite heart—and a life of perfect blessedness beyond death and the grave ! A smile, that shone over her face the moment that she had been brought to know that he had come at last, and was nigh at hand—and that never left it—while her bosom moved—no—not for all the three days and nights that he continued to sit beside the beautiful corpse, when father and mother were forgetting their cares in sleep—that smile told all who stood around, watching her departure, neighbour, friend, priest, parent, and him the suddenly distracted and desolate, that, in the very moment of expiration, she knew him well, and was recommending him and his afflictions to the pity of one who died to save sinners !

Three days and three nights, we have said, did he sit beside her, who so soon was to have been his bride—and come or go who would into the room, he saw them not—his sight was fixed on the winding-sheet, eyeing it without a single tear from feet to forehead, and sometimes looking up to Heaven. As men forgotten in dungeons have lived miserably long without food, so did he—and so he would have done, on and on to the most far-off funeral-day. From that one chair, close to the bedside, he never rose. Night after night, when all the vale was hushed, he never slept. Through one of the midnights there had been a great thunder-storm, the lightning smiting a cliff close to the cottage,—but it seemed that he heard it not—and during the floods of next day, to him the roaring vale was silent. On the morning of the funeral, the old people—for now they seemed to be old—wept

to see him sitting still unconscious beside their dead child—for each of the few remaining hours had now its own sad office, and a man had come to nail down the coffin. Three black specks suddenly alighted on the face of the corpse—and then off—and on—and away—and returning—was heard the buzzing of large hell-flies, attracted by beauty in its corruption. “Ha—ha !” starting up, he cried in horror,—“What birds of prey are these, whom Satan has sent to devour the corpse ?” He became stricken with a sort of palsy—and, being led out to the open air, was laid down, seeming as dead as her within, on the green-daisied turf, where, beneath the shadow of the sycamore they had so often sat, building up beautiful visions of a long blissful life !

The company assembled—but not before his eyes—the bier was lifted up and moved away down the sylvan slope, and away round the head of the lake, and over the wooden bridge, accompanied, here and there, as it passed the way-side houses on the road to Grassmere, by the sound of psalms—but he saw—he heard not,—when the last sound of the spade rebounded from the smooth arch of the grave, he was not by—but all the while he was lying where they left him, with one or two pitying dalesmen at his head and feet. When he awoke again and rose up, the cottage of the Fold was as if she had never been born—for she had vanished for ever and aye, and her sixteen years smiling life was all extinguished in the dust !

Weeks and months passed on, and still there was a vacant wildness in his eyes, and a mortal ghastliness all over his face, inexpressive of a reasonable soul. It scarcely seemed that he knew where he was, or in what part of the earth, yet, when left by himself, he never sought to move beyond the boundaries of the Fold. During the first faint glimmerings of returning reason, he would utter her name, over and over many many times, with a mournful voice, but still he knew not that she was dead—then he began to caution them all to tread softly, for that sleep had fallen upon her, and her fever in its blessed balm might abate—then with groans too affecting to be borne by those who heard them, he would ask why,

since she was dead, God had the cruelty to keep him, her husband, in life; and finally and last of all, he imagined himself in Grassmere churchyard, and clasping a little mound on the green, which it was evident he thought was her grave, he wept over it for hours and hours, and kissed it, and placed a stone at its head, and sometimes all at once broke out into fits of laughter, till the hideous fainting-fits returned, and after long convulsions left him lying as if stone-dead! As for his bodily frame, when Lucy's father lifted it up in his arms, little heavier was it than a bundle of withered fern. Nobody supposed that one so miserably attenuated and ghostlike could for many days be alive—yet not till the earth had revolved seven times around the sun, did that body die, and then it was buried far far away from the Fold, the banks of Rydal water, and the sweet mountains of Westmoreland; for after passing like a shadow through many foreign lands, he ceased his pilgrimage in Palestine, even beneath the shadow of Mount Sion, and was laid with a lock of beautiful hair, which, from the place it held, strangers knew to have belonged to one dearly beloved—close to his heart, on which it had lain so long, and was to moulder away in darkness together, by a Christian hand and in a Christian sepulchre!

Sweet Ambleside! once more we bid thy blue roofs, and embowered chimneys, and hanging gardens, and high-walled orchards—Hail! We pedestrians have made a circle of some fourteen miles since sunrise, yet among us all there is not one weary foot—and Lucy, and Louisa, and Frances, and Harriet, are yet as nimble as roes on the mountain. And now it is the unromantic hour of lunch—of cold fowl, and cranberry tart, and elder-flower wine. Mrs. Ladyman is a jewel of a woman—and one of her pretty modest daughters will show you to your bed-rooms, that you may arrange your love-locks, and let in the cool air among the untouched lilies of your panting bosoms—and then retrip back to the veranda, with delicate ankles twinkling over the dustless black-kids, scarcely too large for the Flower of Pekin, the Moon of the Celestial Empire.

But a few hours after we had taken our departure at

sunrise, arrived the post—and lo! a packet of letters from the uttermost parts of the earth. What careful breaking off of seal-impressions, with “Forget me not,” “N’oubliez,” “Jamais,” “J’espere,” “L’amour,” “L’amitie,” and fond devices of grasping hands, stricken hearts, and billing doves! What a dear delight is a cross-written foolscap, without either head or tail! Who, writing to far-distant friend, remembers the day of the month or the year of our Lord? One silent, poring, rustling, epistolary hour is past, and a thousand pleasant interrogatories, about friends in distant cities losing the summer, have been playfully put and answered—and by one of the party (who shall be nameless one) dear, wire-wove, gilt-edged declaration or reasseveration of eternal love is hidden in a bosom that might well inspire and secure it for ever and a day.

The half of the day—and the sweetest of the two twilights, are yet before us—so let us away to the Langdales—the greater and the lesser—by the lovely Lake of Loughrigg. The side-saddled ponies are at the door—and, staff in hand, long Jonathan Inman—the guide. But here let us—while the ladies are getting themselves provided with pins for the skirts of their riding-habits, and hazel-whips that will, we trow, be humanely applied—indulge in a pensive dream!

Bobby Partridge! methinks we see thee standing in thy wooden-clogs, which never impeded the speed of thy light and easy long-stepped walk—thy weather-stained and iron-pointed oaken towel in thy hand, with which actively couldst thou fling thyself across the cliff-chasms—thy rusted beaver a little turned up all round, almost after the fashion of a learned clerk, and wreathed with gut-lines, armed with killing, but somewhat clumsy, flies, thine own handiwork—a gnostic grin upon thy honest face, quizzingly wondering where the Lakers were about to follow thee their huntsman and whipper-in in the chase of gills, and forces, and tarns, and mighty stones of the desert! Yes, methinks we see thee standing as of yore, on the gravelly steep, before the old front of the old Salutation Inn, while our worthy friend Mr. Wilcock, in his

brown and quaker-like suit, suggested judicious directions, and calculated the leagues to be overgone before set of sun! Many, O Bobby! is the long summer-day's travel we have had with thee over the mountain-tops! By the side of many a lonely tarn have we sat together, and mingled its gelid wave in the sorely-dinted tin-can, with the sinew-strengthening spirit from the Zuyder-Zee. We needed no guide then to our winged feet, for the precipice seemed to sink before us—like a wild deer we crashed our way through the woods—it must have been a broad hill torrent that at one single bound we could not span, nor were we nice about our stepping-stones across the sea-seeking rivers. But, simple soul! we loved thy company in the wild! Not altogether classical were thy *facetiae*, but then they smacked strongly of thy native hills, and often starting from some wayward mood of our own, with which thou couldst have had no sympathy, we yielded such loud laughter to thy half-heard joke, that echo in her cliff replied, and the raven wafted his slow shadow across the tarn. What cared we where we were found by the setting sun—under the awful battlements of Pavay Ark, or in the heart of the clouds on the summit of Scafell?

Among the hills a hundred homes had I—
My table in the wilderness was spread;
In such lone spots one human smile can buy
Kind smiles, warm welcome, and a rushy bed!

Ay, at many an hospitable shepherd's board have we broken bread—making payment with a tale or a song. With our flute have we hushed the kitchen-parlour, and when a fiddle was at hand, with it have we set astir the earthen floor. What salmon-like trouts have we not brought up from the sullen depth, protected from the net by wreathed roots, or log green with the eddies of many years! Can we ever live to forget those Barnmoor-Tarn pikes, each of which would have swallowed a two-year old child! And with what hurry and helter-skelter have we two pursued the yellow-flappers over fen and marsh,

when the old duck and drake had escaped the erring mischief of our long goose-guns?

For fifty years wert thou an unwearied summer pedestrian, nor did thy feet mind the crunching of the snow on the mountain. Often have we seen thee like a bear,—no, not like a bear,—but a Christian man—all dangling with icicles, sweeter and more horrid as the storm increased. Thine iron bones bade defiance to rheumatism; and there, at eve, after a day among the drifts, wouldst thou sit by the kitchen fire of the inn, till frozen feet dissolving sent a stream along the floor. There was no greediness in thy nature, but whatever was the character of the coin received, silver or gold, into thy fob it went with a smirk and a smile. Nor, pleasant to thine eyes as was the froth of the home-brewed, didst thou ever in Salutation, or White Lion, or Black-Cock, or Cherry-Tree, or Eagle and Child, forget the old woman at home, and her whirring wheel! Many prophesied that thou wouldst die rich—but it was not so. Thy widow—it was not our fault—was on the parish at last, but she never slept a night in a poors'-house, and was industrious to the end. Peace—my dear, poor, old Bobby Partridge, to thine ashes—this very night will I drop a tear upon thy grave.

But now all is ready, and away jog the fair equestrians, attended by their foot-esquires, with Long Jonathan in advance; and passing under the sylvan Loughrigg-Fells, cross Brathay's steep hanging bridge, and by a shady lane, yielding peeps of the blue distance, seem resolved to trace the river to its source. Sweeter stream-scenery, with richer fore, and loftier back-ground, is no where to be seen within the four seas. There are cottages so tinged with the hue of the hills, that you can hardly distinguish them from rocks without an eyeglass; others so glittering white, that you see them, whether you will or no, and nothing else upon the brae; some of that modest middle tone that neither shun notice nor court it; and some you know not of what colour, so enveloped in umbrage. Do you wisely admire them all—although, as you pass along, you will single out your favourites, and of

these carry with you images distinct and permanent as in a picture. Here the Brathay glides sparkling along in shallows—there plunges into pools—here it is disturbed as a mountain torrent—there it sleeps in the meadow like a motionless mirror reflecting heaven—and ever and anon you lose its gleam, but not its murmur, in coppice-woods, showing ten to the acre, their stately standard trees.

A gazing group are gathered together on a rocky eminence at High Skelwith, a watchtower, commanding indeed a noble prospect of meadows and fields, and all the gentler features of the vale, gradually blending with hill-scenery, as gradually losing itself in a mountain-landscape, crowned with castellated clouds. As you love us, descend to Skelwith Bridge—cross it—and wind your pleasant way up to Loughrigg-Tarn. “A tarn, in a *vale*,” says Mr. Wordsworth, “implies, for the most part, that the bed of the vale is not happily formed; that the water of the brooks can neither wholly escape, nor diffuse itself over a very large area. Accordingly, in such situations, tarns are often surrounded by an unsightly waste of boggy ground; but this is not always the case; and in cultivated parts of this county, where the shores of the tarn are determined, it differs only from the lake in being smaller, and in belonging mostly to a smaller valley, or circular recess. Of this class of miniature lakes, Loughrigg Tarn is the most beautiful example. It has a margin of green, firm meadows, of rock and rocky-woods—a few reeds here, a little company of water-lilies there, with beds of gravel or stone beyond; a tiny stream, issuing neither briskly nor sluggishly out of it; but its feeding rills, from the shortness of its course, so small as to be scarcely visible. Five or six cottages are reflected in its peaceful bosom; rocky and barren steeps rise up above the hanging enclosures; and the solemn pikes of Langdale overlook, from a distance, the low cultivated ridge of land that forms the northern boundary of this small, quiet, and fertile domain.” Never was any place more perfectly described. Here you have it by another writer attempted in verse.

LOUGHRIGG TARN.

Thou guardian Naiad of this little lake,
Whose banks in unprofaned nature sleep,
(And that in waters lone and beautiful
Dwell spirits radiant as the homes they love,
Have poets still believed,) O surely blest
Beyond all genii or of wood or wave,
Or sylphs that in the shooting sunbeams dwell,
Art thou! yea, happier even than summer-cloud
Beloved by air and sky, and floating slow
O'er the still bosom of upholding heaven.

Beauteous as blest, O Naiad, thou must be!
For, since thy birth, have all delightful things,
Of form and hue, of silence and of sound,
Circled thy spirit, as the crowding stars
Shine round the placid moon. Lov'st thou to sink
Into the cell of sleep? The water parts
With dimpling smiles around thee, and below,
The unsunn'd verdure, soft as cygnet's down,
Meets thy descending feet without a sound.
Lov'st thou to sport upon the watery gleam?
Lucid as air around thy head it lies
Bathing thy sable locks in pearly light,
While all around, the water-lilies strive
To shower their blossoms o'er the virgin queen.
Or doth the shore allure thee?—well it may:
How soft these fields of pastoral beauty melt
In the clear water! neither sand nor stone
Bars herb or wild-flower from the dewy sound,
Like Spring's own voice now rippling round the tarn.
There oft thou liest 'mid the echoing bleat
Of lambs, that race amid the sunny gleams;
Or bees' wide murmur as it fills the broom
That yellows round thy bed. O gentle glades,
Amid the tremulous verdure of the woods,
In steadfast smiles of more essential light,
Lying like azure streaks of placid sky
Amid the moving clouds, the Naiad loves
Your glimmering alleys, and your rustling bowers;
For there, in peace reclined, her half-closed eye
Through the long vista sees her darling lake,
Even like herself, diffused in fair repose.

Not undelightful to the quiet breast
 Such solitary dreams as now have fill'd
 My busy fancy; dreams that rise in peace,
 And thither lead, partaking in their flight
 Of human interests and earthly joys.
 Imagination fondly leans on truth,
 And sober scenes of dim reality
 To her seem lovely as the western sky,
 To the rapt Persian worshipping the sun.
 Methinks this little lake, to whom my heart
 Assign'd a guardian spirit, renders back
 To me, in tenderest gleams of gratitude,
 Profounder beauty to reward my hymn.

Long hast thou been a darling haunt of mine,
 And still warm blessings gush'd into my heart,
 Meeting or parting with thy smiles of peace.
 But now, thy mild and gentle character,
 More deeply felt than ever, seems to blend
 Its essence pure with mine, like some sweet tune
 Oft heard before with pleasure, but at last,
 In one high moment of inspired bliss,
 Borne through the spirit like an angel's song.

This is the solitude that reason loves !
 Even he who yearns for human sympathies,
 And hears a music in the breath of man,
 Dearer than voice of mountain or of flood,
 Might live a hermit here, and mark the sun
 Rising or setting, 'mid the beauteous calm,
 Devoutly blending in his happy soul
 Thoughts both of earth and heaven !—yon mountain-side,
 Rejoicing in its clustering cottages,
 Appears to me a paradise preserved
 From guilt by Nature's hand, and every wreath
 Of smoke, that from these hamlets mounts to heaven,
 In its straight silence holy as a spire—
 Rear'd o'er the house of God.

Thy sanctity
 Time yet hath revered ; and I deeply feel
 That innocence her shrine shall here preserve
 For ever.—The wild vale that lies beyond,
 Circled by mountains trod but by the feet
 Of venturous shepherd, from all visitants,

Save the free tempests and the fowls of heaven,
Guards thee;—and wooded knolls fantastical
Seclude thy image from the gentler dale,
That, by the Brathay's often-varied voice
Cheer'd as it winds along, in beauty fades
'Mid the green banks of joyful Windermere !

O gentlest lake! from all unhallow'd things
By grandeur guarded in thy loveliness,
Ne'er may thy poet with unwelcome feet
Press thy soft moss embathed in flowery dies,
And shadow'd in thy stillness like the heavens !
May innocence for ever lead me here,
To form amid the silence high resolves
For future life ; resolves, that, born in peace,
Shall live 'mid tumult, and though haply mild
As infants in their play, when brought to bear
On the world's business, shall assert their power
And majesty—and lead me boldly on
Like giants conquering in a noble cause.

This is a holy faith, and full of cheer
To all who worship Nature, that the hours
Pass'd tranquilly with her, fade not away
For ever like the clouds, but in the soul
Possess a secret silent dwelling-place,
Where with a smiling visage memory sits,
And startles oft the virtuous, with a show
Of unsuspected treasures. Yea, sweet lake !
Oft hast thou borne into my grateful heart
Thy lovely presence, with a thousand dreams
Dancing and brightening o'er thy sunny wave,
Though many a dreary mile of mist and snow
Between us interposed. And even now,
When yon bright star hath risen to warn me home,
I bid thee farewell in the certain hope,
That thou, this night, wilt o'er my sleeping eyes
Shed cheering visions, and with freshest joy
Make me salute the dawn. Nor may the hymn
Now sung by me unto thy listening woods,
Be wholly vain,—but haply it may yield
A gentle pleasure to some gentle heart,
Who, blessing, at its close, the unknown bard,
May, for his sake, upon thy quiet banks
Frame visions of his own, and other songs
More beautiful, to Nature, and to thee !

After half an hour's loitering in the birch-woods, and half an hour's reclining on the mossy bank, while a couple of hatless urchins tend the ponies, cropping a welcome meal by the road-side, you will not grudge to return to Skelwith Bridge, and so on for an up-and-down romantic mile to Colwith Force, one of the finest of the Westmoreland waterfalls. By a little scrambling, you may get through the underwood, not far above the level of the channel, to a point where the cataract is seen in all its height and breadth, with a noble background of mountains. Thence to Angle Tarn in Little Langdale, the road winds through pleasant thickets, with not much to be seen by heedless or uninstructed eyes; but to those who know how to see and study the character of a country, full of unobtrusive and expressive features, that smile upon you for a moment, and disappear in varied succession. You must not, at present, think of ascending Hard-Knot and Wrynose, for that road (traversed of yore by hundreds of pack-horses every year) would lead you away over to Eskdale, and down to the shores of the sea; but keeping the ancient building of Fellfoot, embowered in trees, to your left, turn to the right, and, after a short bleak distance, you will behold Blea Tarn, a lonely, and if in nature there be any thing of that character, a melancholy depth of water! It is thus finely described in Mr. Wordsworth's Excursion, as the abode of his Solitary:

Unlike it is in shape—deep as an urn;
With rocks encompass'd, save that to the south
In one small opening, where a heath-clad ridge
Supplies a boundary less abrupt and close,
A quiet treeless nook, with two green fields,
A liquid pool that glitters in the sun,
And one bare dwelling;—one abode—no more!
It seems the house of poverty and toil,
Though not of want. The little fields made green
By husbandry of many thrifty years,
Pay cheerful tribute to the moorland house.
There crows that cock, single in his domain;
The small birds find in spring no thicket there
To shroud them; only from the neighbouring vales
The cuckoo, straggling up to the hill-top,
Shouteth faint tidings of some gladder place.

Ah ! what a sweet recess, thought I, is here !
Instantly throwing down my limbs at ease
Upon a bed of heath ;—full many a spot
Of hidden beauty have I chanced to espy
Among the mountains—never one like this !
So lonesome and so perfectly secure :
Not melancholy—no, for it is green,
And bright, and fertile ; furnish'd in itself
With the few needful things which life requires.

In rugged arms how soft it seems to lie,
How tenderly protected ! Far and near
We have an image of the pristine earth,
The planet in its nakedness. Were this
Man's only dwelling, sole appointed seat,
First, last, and single, in this breathing world,
It could not be more quiet : peace is here,
Or nowhere ; days unruddled by the gale
Of public news or private ; years that pass
Forgetfully ; uncall'd upon to pay
The common penalties of mortal life,
Sickness or accident, or grief or pain !

“ What ! ” methinks we hear a voice exclaim—“ Is that a description of bare, dull, dreary, moorland Blea-Pond, where a man and a Christian would die through mere blank vacancy, and weary want of world, of eye, and ear ! ” Hush, critic, hush ! forget ye that there are sermons in stones, and good in every thing ? In what would the poet differ from the worthy man of prose, if his imagination possessed not a beautifying and transmuting power over the objects of the inanimate world ? Nay, even the naked truth itself is seen clearly but by poetic eyes ; and wert thou all at once to become a poet, thou wouldst absolutely shed tears over the guilt of that Vandalism—“ Blea Pond.” Yonder ass licking his lips at a thistle, sees but water for him to drink in Windermere a-glow with the golden lights of setting suns. The ostler or the boots at Lowood-Inn takes a somewhat higher flight, and for a moment pauses with curry-comb or blacking-brush in his suspended hand. The waiter, who has cultivated his taste from conversation with Lakers, learns their phraseology, and declares the sunset to be exceedingly handsome. The Laker, who sometimes has a soul, feels

it rise within him, as the rim of the orb disappears in the glow of softened fire. The artist compliments Nature, by likening her evening glories to a picture in Claude Lorraine—while the poet feels the sense sublime

Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man ;
A motion and a spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things.

Do you know, we really form a very picturesque and gipsy-looking group, half-hidden in brackens on the side of this rock-crowned knoll. Now, these parasols might be supposed to be the green tents of the fairies. Lady-loves ! never looked ye more beautiful. And how appropriately these long-maned mountain-ponies are cropping the short herbage of the wild ! Long Jonathan throws a noble shadow—and the croak of the Blea Tarn raven is sublime. Let us recline here a few minutes longer—and you shall hear a Tale.

The house now in ruins, that we passed a few hundred yards ago, among some dark firs, just before we began to ascend the hill, was some years ago inhabited by Miles Mackareth, a man of some substance, and universally esteemed for his honest and pious character. His integrity, however, wanted the grace of courteousness, and his religion was somewhat gloomy and austere, while all the habits of his life were sad, secluded, and solitary. His fireside was always decent, but never cheerful—there the passing traveller partook of an ungrudging, but a grave hospitality—and although neighbours dropping in unasked were always treated as neighbours, yet seldom were they invited to pass an evening below his roof, except upon the stated festivals of the seasons, or some domestic event demanding sociality, according to the country custom. Year after year the gloom deepened on his strong-marked intellectual countenance ; and his hair, once black as jet, became untimely gray. Indeed, although little more than fifty years old, when you saw

his head uncovered, you would have taken him for a man approaching to threescore and ten. His wife and only daughter, both naturally of a cheerful disposition, grew every year more retired, till at last they shunned society altogether, and were seldom seen but at church. And now a vague rumour ran through the hamlets of the neighbouring valleys, that Miles Mackareth was scarcely in his right mind—that he had been heard by shepherds on the hills talking to himself wild words, and pacing up and down in a state of distraction. The family ceased to attend divine worship, and as for some time the Sabbath had been the only day they were visible, few or none now knew how they fared, and by many they were utterly forgotten. Meanwhile, during the whole summer, the miserable man haunted the loneliest places; and, to the terror of his wife and daughter, who had lost all power over him, and durst not speak, frequently passed whole days they knew not where, and came home, silent, haggard, and ghastly, about midnight. His widow afterwards told, that he seldom slept, and never without dreadful dreams—that often, often would he sit up all night in his bed, with eyes fixed and staring on nothing, and uttering ejaculations for mercy for all his sins.

What these sins were he never confessed—nor, as far as man may judge of man, had he ever committed any act that needed to lie heavy on his conscience. But his whole being, he said, was one black sin—and a spirit had been sent to tell him, that his doom was to be with the wicked through all the ages of eternity. That spirit, without form or shadow—only a voice—seldom left his side day or night, go where he would; but its most dreadful haunt was under a steep rock called Blake-rigg-scaur (you hear the raven now upon it); and thither, in whatever direction he turned his face on leaving his own door, he was led by an irresistible impulse, even as a child is led by the hand. Tenderly and truly had he once loved his wife and daughter, nor less because that love had been of few words, silent, and with a shade of sorrow. But now he looked on them almost as if they had been strangers—except at times, when he started up, kissed them, and wept. His whole soul was possessed by hor-

rid fantasies, of which it was itself object and victim; and it is probable, that had he seen them both lying dead, he would have left their corpses in the house, and taken his way to the mountains. At last one night passed away and he came not. His wife and daughter, who had not gone to bed, went to the nearest house and told their tale. In an hour a hundred feet were traversing all the loneliest places—till a hat was seen floating on Blea Tarn, and then all knew that the search was near an end. Drags were soon got from the fishermen on Windermere, and a boat crossed and recrossed the tarn on its miserable quest, till in an hour, during which wife and daughter sat without speaking on a stone by the water-edge, the body came floating to the surface, with its long silver hair. One single shriek only, it is said, was heard, and from that shriek till three years afterwards, his widow knew not that her husband was with the dead. On the brink of that small sandy bay the body was laid down and cleansed of the muddy weeds—his daughter's own hands assisting in the rueful work—and she walked among the mourners, the day before the Sabbath, when the funeral entered the little burial-ground of Langdale chapel, and the congregation sung a Christian psalm over the grave of the forgiven suicide!

But whom have we here, perched upon a knoll, and each sitting upon a tripod, or three-legged stool?—A brace of artists; and doubtless they have been sketching the party all the time of this doleful story. Time was when the lake-country swarmed with gentlemen of the profession. You could not stoop down to take a drink out of a well by the wayside, without being instantly clapped into the foreground of a landscape intended for the London Exhibition of Water-Colour Paintings. If your coat was not of the right colour, it was changed in a jiffy into red or purple, to harmonise with the setting sun. A boundless hat was put on your head, composed of most extraordinary materials; and a pretty tatterdemallion you were made of by the edge of the silver fountain. Many of these artists being Cockneys, had never seen a mountain in all their days; nor any other mist than one shrouding from view the City of London Tavern.

In their hands the Langdale Pikes used to be singular fishes indeed ; and their clouds seemed to be woven in a manufactory of power-looms. Every cottage in the three mountain counties was transmogrified into such lodges as the mail-coach passengers admire, on the roadside, while the guard drops the leather-bag, containing political information for the Surrey squire, a man of Whig politics, and burdened estate !—The entire region was dislocated and turned up-side down. Treeless tarns became lakes valuable for their timber ; chasmy streams, with hundreds of headlong cataracts, assumed the staid demeanour of canals under lock and key ; Dungeon-Gills lost their ancient horrors, and looked as smirk as prisons after a visit from Mr. Fowel Buxton, and Mrs. Fry ; the great wide moors were enlivened by judiciously-planted houses of entertainment for man and horse ; and the Alpine road, cleaving to the breast of the precipice, and making a narrow escape over the pass, was widened into a respectable turnpike, and, had that great man begun to flourish, doubtless had been Macadamized.

Paintings, finished off from such sketches from nature, gave the Londoners impressions of the scenery of the north of England, which a future fortnight's tour might confuse, but could never correct. There they hung in gorgeous gilt frames, before the gaze of an admiring public, the name of each in the shilling catalogue, an enormous lie. Such a misbegotten domicile as you sometimes see in the scenery of a perambulatory theatre, the illegitimate offspring of a poor simple country cot, seduced by a tall, strapping, clerical character of a Gothic church—*that*, it is positively asserted, is to be seen in the neighbourhood of Ambleside ! Then for AMBLESIDE herself ! Trees transplanted full-grown from one of the most fertile provinces of Asia overshadow Mr. Benson's smithy—and the chapel-tower of the true Westmoreland breed, square, stout, and sturdy, like a man made for wrestling, and with an air of mountain independence, holding possession of its own churchyard, is juggled into an Oriental pagoda ! while, finally, all the roofs of the houses are flat, that on them the natives may drink tea, and study the stars. A patch of shadow for water,—something very rough in-

deed, personating an island,—mountains of green mud and an indigo heaven—that in the said catalogue, was printed GRASSMERE; while a lying ticket on the right-hand low corner of the frame did not scruple to say “SOLD.” A long perplexing stretch of light and shade, whether of liquid or solid matter, no man could without severe thought conjecture, but which ultimately looked rather like a lake—here apparently dotted with wild-ducks, there with pieces of timber, to which human heads adhered, designed for a flotilla, perhaps a regatta,—was audaciously christened—WINDERMERE! but not SOLD, the price being understood to be four hundred guineas, and only within the range of Sir John Leicester, now my lord —.

Leaving the three artists to finish us off at their leisure, dear ladies! remount, and promise not to lift your eyes from your ponies' ears till we cry “Eyes forward!” We wish you to enjoy the soul-uplifting emotion of instantaneous magnificence. There, honest Jonathan, hold the gate open till the cavalry get through; and now, ladies, lovely and beloved, behold the VALE OF GREAT LANGDALE!

There is no lake in that depth profound—the glittering sunshine hides a cloud of rich enclosures, scattered over with single trees; and immediately below your feet, a stately sycamore-grove, shrouding the ancient dwelling of Wall-end. Ay, your dazzled eyes begin now to discern the character of the vale, gradually forming itself into permanent order out of the wavering confusion. That thread of silver is a stream? Yonder seeming wreath of snow a waterfall! No castles are these built by hands, but the battlements of the eternal cliffs! There you behold the mountains, from their feet resting on the vale as on a footstool, up to their crests in the clear blue sky! And what a vast distance from field to cloud!

You have been in Italy, and Spain, and Switzerland—say, then, saw ye ever, any one of you, mountains more sublime than the Langdale Pikes?—Hear the great poet of Nature!

“Many are the notes
Which in his tuneful course the wind draws forth
From rocks, woods, caverns, heaths, and dashing shores:

And well those lofty brethren bear their part
In the wild concert, chiefly when the storm
Rides high ; then all the upper air they fill
With roaring sound, that ceases not to flow,
Like smoke, along the level of the blast
In mighty current ; theirs, too, is the song
Of stream and headlong flood that seldom fails ;
And, in the grim and breathless hour of noon,
Methinks that I have heard them echo back
The thunder's greeting : nor have Nature's laws
Left them ungifted with a power to yield
Music of finer frame ; a harmony,
So do I call it, though it be the hand
Of silence, though there be no voice ;—the clouds,
The mist, the shadows, light of golden suns,
Motions of moonlight, all come hither—touch,
And have an answer—thither come, and shape
A language not unwelcome to sick hearts
And idle spirits :—there the sun himself,
At the calm close of summer's longest day,
Rests his substantial orb ;—between those heights,
And on the top of either pinnacle,
More keenly than elsewhere, in night's blue vault,
Sparkle the stars, as of their station proud.
Thoughts are not busier in the mind of man
Than the mute agents stirring there :—alone
Here do I sit and watch."

Ascending steep mountains is slavish work ; but descending steep mountains is pastime for the lords and the ladies of the earth. So, leaving all quadrupeds behind, we glide spirally down to the meads of Langdale vale, half walking and half flying, and with slightly quickened respiration are all leaning over the rails of a wooden bridge floored with sods, over a pool in which we can count the white twinkling minnows. The huge heights fling their shadows quite across the glen, and the silence of earth and heaven is at once sweet and awful. We have reached the beautiful farm-houses of Millbeck, quite forgetful of our cavalry in the rear ; and we could never hold up our heads among travellers, were we to pass by Dungeon Gill.

There is not on all the earth a rock-dungeon more incomprehensible to geologists. That torrent, fierce as it

often is, never hollowed out that dark prison-cell, where incarceration needs neither chains nor jailor. Earthquake probably cleft the rocks into that penitentiary, in which every whispered prayer would be answered by an echo. One huge stone has fallen across the chasm—a dizzy and ledgeless bridge, over which the very goat would almost fear to clamber. A mile farther up, and you would stand by the brink of Stickle Tarn, and beneath Pavey Ark, the most magnificent range of rocks in Westmoreland.

“There is a cove—a huge recess,
That keeps till June December’s snow,
A mighty precipice in front,
A silent tarn below.
There sometimes does a leaping fish
Send through the tarn a lonely cheer;
The crags repeat the raven’s croak
In symphony austere.
Thither the rainbow comes, the cloud,
And mists that spread the flying shower,
And sunbeams, and the flying blast,
That, if it could, would hurry past,
But that enormous barrier finds it fast!”

But to see every thing in one day is impossible; so let us away down the vale on our return to Ambleside.

Yet since the ponies have been put into the stable, and Jonathan is manifestly munching cheese and bread on the stone-seat within the porch of that farm-house, that almost looks as if it were an inn, suppose we step across the threshold, and pay a visit to the interior. Chairs are instantly swept of every slightest particle of dust by ready arm and apron, and a comely matron and her three tidy daughters request us with smiles to be seated. The husband is away at his work in the slate-quarries; but without him the honours are done to perfection. The house-clock points to six,—so setting aside two hours for breakfast and luncheon, we have absolutely been twelve astir. But then, to be sure, there was the loiter and the saunter, and the sitting, and the reclining, and the lying in sun or shade, on knoll and in dell, over gate and on rustic bridge, on mossy-stump soft as any

cushion, and couch among the lady-fern, canopied by the quivering birch-trees. Therefore, not a single soul of the party is fatigued in lith or limb; but across their imaginations comes the half-wish half-hope of dinner; a vision of crumpled oatmeal cakes round a delf-ware bowl of liquid, be it milk or cream.

As at the touch of magic wand, the wish of imagination becomes a reality—and we are all busy at our pastoral repast. We are not so voraciously hungry as not to notice the furniture of our banquet-room, the blue sky hardly visible through the small-paned lead-latticed window, for the green, fragrant, and flowery exotics, that, in their healthful beauty, show the unforgetful care of many superintending hands. A curious, rich-carved, antique oak-cabinet—with the date, apparently burned into the wood, 1666, shows among a few household articles, about a dozen volumes: among others, two or three prayer-books and a Bible. A huge beam divides the room into two—the smaller part being all chimney, suspended round with hams; and a half open door in the lath-and-plaster, gives a glimpse of curtains in a bed-room, looking into the garden behind, under shadow of the hill. A long table, almost the whole length of the room, crosses the front window—a high-backed settle is opposite, at one side of the grateless fire-place, and the oval board on which our feast is spread, and the chairs we occupy, constitute, with a stool or two, the whole furniture of the parlour-kitchen-dining-room.

But what is all this bustle about—this going-out and coming-in first of one daughter and then of another, with faces not without anxiety, and hasty words addressed to each other and the matron, to us almost unintelligible in their pleasant provincialism? It is drying-day, and the sunny green at no great distance from the door, with its perpetual well of bleaching waters, is covered with all the linen about the house, as with snow. There is going to be a tremendous shower; and the frightened nymphs collecting shift, and cap, and sheet, and other wearing or sleeping apparel under their arms, bring the whole treasure of napery, under shelter, with curtseys and blushes of apology and confusion. We are indeed the most for-

tunate lakers in the world—for we are about to be treated—with a THUNDERSTORM!

In two minutes it seems two hours nearer night. Go to the door, and say if you ever saw a sabler sky than that of the growling west. A big, warm rain-drop splashes on your face as you gaze upwards, and a sultry smell comes from the dusty road and fields, hard in a long drought. Nothing stirs. The hive is without a bee even on the front board, and the swallow sits with her white breast mute in her nest below the slate-eaves. The dog has gone whining into a dark corner—and chanticleer crows not. The growl, as of a lion prowling here and there through a forest, comes and goes, yet forsaking not the dark sky-bounds that now emit afar off forked fire. But a cloud right over-head, that has been slowly sailing thither apparently without wind, flashes, and in a moment, as if the cope of heaven were of metal, it rattles with sharp, fierce, and long-continued thunder, bounding up and down, and giving way to a crash of echoes that with awful pauses roll circling along the tops of the mountains, and die away, one would almost think, into another world. A deluge drenches the only part of the vale now visible—that near you. Showers are seen falling in floods, each a broad broken streak in the grim atmosphere at the hidden head of the vale, and in a few minutes, hundreds of white torrents are leaping through the mist, and the main vale-stream quickening its pace, and raising its voice, flows on covered with foam-bells, and ere nightfall will be in flood.

Nothing can be more absurd than to be angry with any man, woman, or child, who may be frightened out of his or her wits-end at thunder. The horrible closeness of the grim air oppresses the heart: and the soul sinks in the disturbance of the senses. In such cases it is cruel to scold. You might as well lose your temper with your wife for being drowned or suffocated. Neither is the danger by any means despicable. Out of a townfull of people, thirty thousand strong, as many are killed and wounded in a pitched thunderstorm, as of the same number of Spaniards during almost any one pitched battle—in position with our army—in the Peninsula—that is to

say—four or five. Each individual, too, feels himself in the brunt of the action; and all kinds of accursed conductors are at his ear and elbow. Every person who has behaved himself gallantly in fifty great decisive pitched thunderstorms, ought to wear a medal—and belong to the order of Electricity.

The rain is over and gone, and the white mists are wreathing themselves into a thousand forms all along the sides of the mountains, while all the vale is visible with its freshened verdure of meadows, trees, and groves. More and more of the glittering rocky heights are gradually revealed. Now one hill-top and now another rears its known character aloft out of the disparting shroud; and the two giants stretch themselves up, as it would seem, to enjoy the only blue region in heaven. A low, thick, awakening warble of joy is in the woods—the cattle again begin to feed—the lambs renew their gambols on the braes—and within the house smiles are returning to solemn, and somewhat pale faces; a more cheerful strain of conversation arises, and hark, one of the mountain-maidens without doors lilting, like a linnet, broken snatches of a song!

To the worthy family of Millbeck we bid a cheerful farewell; and unconsciously elated by the purity of the air inspiring as that gas of Paradise, which made Sir Humphry Davy dance, such is the power of our imagination that not an object in nature can help being beautiful. Poets and poetesses are we, one and all of us, that is certain, and perfectly willing to exclaim with Mr. Wordsworth,—

“Oh! many are the poets that are sown
By nature; men endowed with highest gifts,
The visions and the faculty divine,
Yet wanting the accomplishment of verse!”

The want of the accomplishment of verse imposes a necessity on us in writing in prose—but it does not prevent us from speaking in poetry—as will be admitted by all who have ever enjoyed the delight of our conversation. Down the glittering valley we straggle in ones and twos—and for a mile together walk mute in the crowd of our

own bright or shadowy imaginings. Silence is a thing indeed truly divine, and often do we wish for a world without tongues. Worldless ideas are alone worthy of spiritual essence; and not even a single monosyllable drops in upon the stillness of living thought. So speechless are we all—as clouds or ghosts,—as we turn our eyes well pleased towards the small serene Langdale chapel, from which fancy hears the sound of the Sabbath-psalm—the wild beauty of Elter-water is passed without encomium, its moorish meadows and wilderness of woods—the Brathay, without any accompaniment from our voices, is suffered to trill his jocund song, and in silence we bid the first far-off reappearing gleam of Windermere hail!—First a whisper, and then a word, and then an imperfect sentence, as single houses become more frequent, and the clustered hamlets enliven the cultivated hill-side—till collecting our scattered forces into one group on Rothay bridge, we salute beautiful Ambleside almost with a cheer, and see from the dimness that shrouds her church-tower, that twilight is closing ON A DAY AMONG THE MOUNTAINS.

MODES OF TRAVELLING.

(Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, 1826.)

AMONG the innumerable characteristics of Maga, no one is more surprising than that brought to light by the heat of the bygone summer. She is a salamander. While all the other monthlies panted, purpled, and perspired, Maga drew her breath serenely as on the cool mountain-top; the colour of her countenance was unchanged, except that its pinks and carnations glowed like a bouquet of prize-flowers, and the dew upon her forehead glistened but as that on the queen-tree of the forest. Like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, all in one, she came unscathed out of the very heat that set the snow on fire on Lochnagair; and she now dishevels to the winds of autumn the unsinged beauty of her flowing tresses. The other monthlies are as mummies, laid on their backs, with ape-like faces, sorely shrivelled in their yellow hue, shrouded in mouldy cerements, emitting a grave-smell—melancholy images of the wisdom of the Egyptians. Maga—the divine Maga—flourishes in immortal youth; her frowns are yet as death, her smiles as life, and when with ambrosial kisses she bathes his eyes, what author is not in Elysium?

Yet that all the other periodicals should have nearly perished, is a matter rather for pity than reproach. They could not help it. The drought was excessive. The drop in a thousand pens was dried up; and even Mr. Coleridge's patent inkstand itself stood liquidless as a sand-bottle. You missed the cottage girl with her pitcher at the well in the brae, for the spring scarcely trickled, and the water-cresses were yellow before their time. Many a dancing bill-stream was dead—only here and

there one stronger than her sisters attempted a pas-seul over the shelving rocks; but all choral movements and melodies forsook the mountains, still and silent as so much painted canvass. Waterfalls first tamed their thunder, then listened alarmed to their own echoes, wailed themselves away into diminutive murmurs, gasped for life, died, and were buried at the feet of the green slippery precipices. Tarns sank into moors; and there was the voice of weeping heard and low lament among the water lilies. Ay, millions of pretty flowerets died in their infancy, even on their mothers' breasts; the bee fainted in the desert for want of the honey-dew, and the ground-cells of industry were hushed below the heather. Cattle lay lean on the brownness of a hundred hills, and the hoof of the red-deer lost its fleetness. Along the shores of lochs great stones appeared, within what for centuries had been the lowest water mark; and whole bays, once bright and beautiful with reed-pointed wavelets, became swamps, cracked and seamed, or rustling in the aridity, with a useless erop, to the sigh of the passing wind. On the shore of the great sea alone, you beheld no change. The tides ebbed and flowed as before—the small billow racing over the silver sands to the same goal of shells, or climbing up to the same wild flowers that bathe the foundation of yonder old castle belonging to the ocean.

That in such a state of things, the London Magazines should have shrivelled themselves up, or, if the use of the active mood be too bold, and the passive more appropriate, should have been shrivelled up in the manner above alluded to, is, we repeat it, subject matter rather of pity than reproach. But the snow fires on Lochnagair have been extinguished, and Foyers, like a giant refreshed with mountain dew after the late rains, but with no intention of suicide, has flung himself over his cliff in a voice of thunder. The autumnal woods are fresher than those of summer. The mild harvest moon will yet repair the evil done by the outrageous sun; and, in the gracious after-growth, the green earth far and wide rejoices as in spring. Like people that have hidden themselves in caves when their native land was oppressed, out gush the torrents and descend with songs to the plain. The hill-country is

itself again when it hears the voice of streams. Magnificent army of mists, whose array encompasses islands of the sea, and who still, as thy glorious vanguard keeps deploying among the glens, rollest on in silence more sublime than the trampling of the feet of horses, or the sound of the wheels of chariots, to the heath-covered mountains of Scotland, we bid thee hail! Lo! sunbeams are thy banners! And as they are unfurled over the seas, Ben Nevis blows his solitary trumpet, and a thousand echoes welcome the invasion!

Away, then, to the Highlands—away with us, gentle reader—away!—One week—one fortnight's flight, will add years to your pilgrimage here below; and your funeral, long long hence, will be attended by at least one hundred and fifty-seven children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and children, whose descent from your body will seem absolutely lost in the darkness of antiquity.

"What! must we leave the beautiful lakes and mountains of England, which we were just beginning to understand and to enjoy? and is it thus, Christopher, you cheat us out of our 'Hints for the Holidays'?" Oh! gentle reader, hast thou only now begun to discover the character of the capricious old man?

Modo me Thebis modo ponit Athenis.

At every twinge at our toe our will undergoes a revolution—and yet you complain of us for not being in the same mood for two months at a time! Heaven preserve us! in the same mood for sixty-two days and sixty-two nights! That is more than you are entitled to expect from a bottle of hock a hundred years old. Although the ancient gentleman's mouth is corked, his spirit is at work in the bin: and his character has continued to change for a century, from Sabbath to Sabbath. Of all our excellencies as an editor, we doubt if there be one more valuable than our total disregard of truth. What promises have we not broken! How many solitary number ones have we not brought forward, full of hope as founders of a dynasty of articles, and then left them to stand disconsolate by themselves, unfollowed by the rest of the series!

Yet in all these, and our manifold other enormities, a man of discernment sees our profound knowledge of character, not only of individuals, but of human nature at large. It is gratifying to many principles in our mortal frame, to see a fine, showy vapouring article, with all the rashness of youth, rush into the magazine in glittering arms, offensive and defensive, challenging the whole periodicals of the age in which he flourishes, one after another, to mortal combat, and then sinking a No. I. into everlasting oblivion, before he has been permitted by fate even so much as to spit a Cockney. What reminiscence can be more solemn than that of the first part of an essay on tragedy, left incomplete, perhaps, by the death of the author, or some mismanagement of the clerk of the Balaam! How affecting to the subscriber of sensibility, a tour on the continent, terminating with the death of the ingenious author a few stages beyond Calais! "To be continued," is never half so pathetic at the close of a communication, as when you are afterwards informed in the obituary, that it cannot be on this side of the grave. For our own parts, when we see an Epithalamium taking the place of No. II. of a promised series of elegies, although we feel as if the funeral baked-meats do coldly furnish up the marriage tables, yet such is the charm of variety, that while there is a tear on our cheek there is a smile in our eye, and we are willing to forget the unrejoicing dead for the sake of the happy couple setting off on the honey-moon. In short, on taking up a new number of *Ebony*, are you not often delighted to find, that there is not in it one single article that you had been led to expect? Fairest of readers—you are at first a little angry or so, and pout so prettily that we wish we were by to kiss those sullen lips relaxing into a sunny smile. Tossing your scorn away with one glitter of your head, with all the fickleness of your sex you suffer your affections to be won by number for September (CXVII.), and forgetting Windermere, and Grassmere, and Rydal, as entirely as if they were air-woven waters of the sky, set off with Christopher North to the land of cakes and chieftains.

And how shall we travel? In a BALLOON? No, no. After all the boasted science of the age, what is a bal-

loon but a bubble like that of the South Sea? Why does not Davy or Leslie invent a rudder for the sky-ship! But the course of the currents above is all unknown, and in those regions we are ignorant of the nature of the trade-winds.

Do you long for wings, and envy the dove or the eagle? Not if you be wise. Alas! such is human nature, that in one year's time the novelty of pinions would be over, and you would skim undelighted the edges of the clouds. Why do we think it a glorious thing to fly from the summit of some inland mountain away to distant isles? Because our feet are bound to the dust. We enjoy the eagle's flight far more than the eagle himself, driving headlong before the storm. For imagination dallies with the unknown power, and the wings that are denied to our bodies are expanded in our souls. Sublime are the circles the sun-staring creature traces in the heaven, to us who lie stretched among the heather-bloom. Could we do the same, we should still be longing to pierce through the atmosphere to some other planet; and an elevation of leagues above the snows of Chimbarazo, would not satisfy our aspirations. But we can calculate the distance of the stars, and are happy as Galileo in his dungeon.

Well, then—shall we content ourselves with a STEAM-BOAT? With the fairy floating palace the United Kingdom? No. The sound of her enginery is like that of a horse whose wind is broken, or the director-general's haggis, that was a roarer. Give us one of the wooden coursers of the true old English breed, that trace their descent from the reign of Alfred, and that have braved for a thousand years the battle and the breeze. What though she must obey the blast—it is like a servant, not a slave. Gloriously she carries her motion, even by a side wind; and when Eolus and Neptune clear the course, hurra! to the foaming thunder that rolls away from before her triumphant prows! In the blue sky how beautiful her cloud of sail! Nor desire we any other meteors than her streaming flags. No smoke accompanies her walk on the waters, unless when she rejoices, in peace or war, saluting the star of some “tall admiral,”

or commanding the foe of the Isle to haul down his country's ensign, and fall under the dominion of her wake.

Or shall we journey in a *BAROUCHE*? Pleasantest of land-carriages, whether horsed with chestnuts or bays. Tree and tower go swimmingly by, and whole fields of corn-sheaves seem of themselves to be hurrying to harvest-home. The whole world is a peristrepheic panorama, and turnpike gates seem placed not to impede motion, but to promote. Village follows village quickly, even in a thinly inhabited country, so rapid is the imperceptible progress of the sixteen hoofs; and we drive through towns and cities from sun to sun.

Or what think you of a *GIG*? Why, for hob-nobbing not so very much amiss. Yet where is the male or female human being by whose side you would wish to sit for five hundred or a thousand miles? When the steed stumbles, and down upon his nose—where then are you, and where the wife of your bosom? Playing on the grave^l at all-fours, a pastime unbecoming at your time of lives, and always accompanied with danger. Or if a deluge-cloud attends you from stage to stage, slackening or quickening its pace by your example, what avails an umbrella, but to frighten the only animal on whom your salvation depends? For surely you would not be so lost to all sense of the becoming as to hoist a hood to your shandry, and in such hideous vehicle drive through the hootings of a Christian population, however scant, and limited to a few wayside schools? Then, at rural inns, not an ostler in a thousand can harness a gig within many buckles of the right thing. You find a rein drawn through below the breeching, and the breeching itself unmercifully imprisoning the hams of honest Dobbin, who, at the first hill, presses his hurdies against the splash-board, (what a word!) and, in fear so undistinguishably blended with anger, that it would puzzle the acutest metaphysician to analyze the complex emotion, begins hobbling, and careering, and larking, and kicking, and funking, till you begin to apprehend that the short tour of the Highlands will be short indeed, and to curse the hour in which you read the "Hints for the Holidays," that set you a-gig.

Perhaps you prefer HORSEBACK. If so, you must be a very young man, and can have seen very little of this world. In three days, the saddle has worn off a hand-breadth of skin from your nag's back, and not much less than a hand-breadth from that part of your body most connected with the said saddle. The insides of your knees also, if narrowly inspected, will be found to be considerably inflamed; and you begin to fear that you must have got the rheumatism in your shoulders, and eke a slight twinge of the lumbago. Thenceforth all is misery. Gentlemen's and noblemen's seats may all glide by, but the only seat you e'er think of is your own seat in the saddle; and you try it in every possible posture without permanent relief. Plasters are of no avail; they crumple up, and if they fail, no posterior application can be expected to prove successful. It is fortunate when your nag has cast a couple of shoes; for then it occurs to you, for the first time, to get off and walk. Finding it troublesome to lead the animal, you give a boy a shilling to take him to the nearest smithy. The urchin is no sooner out of sight than he sets off at full gallop, having provided himself with a switch, in the shape of a thistle or bunweed; and, on your turning up to the abode of the village Vulcan, you find your forty-guinea roadster dead lame with bleeding pasterns; and the boy, the son of a poor widow with ten children, under the hands of the apothecary, with a fracture in his skull the size of a half-crown. Your purse alone can pacify the mother; and you have to remain three days, viewing the stunted scenery about a clachan, whose name you in vain search for in your travelling-map, and that does not afford any edifice worth seeing except an old lime-kiln, perhaps, that is passed off for something built by the Romans.

But if in lad or manhood, and accustomed to use the limbs which nature has given you, why not be a PEDESTRIAN? Yes—delights there indeed are, which none but pedestrians know, and that come now softened to our memory through the mists of years. Much—all depends on the character of the wanderer; he must have known what it is to commune with his own thoughts and feelings, and be satisfied even as with the converse of a chosen

friend. Not that he must always, in the solitudes that await him, be in a meditative mood, for ideas and emotions will of themselves arise, and he will only have to enjoy the pleasures which his own being spontaneously affords. It would indeed be a hopeless thing, if we were always to be on the search for happiness. Intellect, imagination, and feeling, all work of their own free will and not at the order of any taskmaster. A rill soon becomes a stream—a stream a river—a river a loch—and a loch a sea. So is it with the current within the spirit. It carries us along, without either oar or sail, increasing in depth, breadth, and swiftness, yet all the while the wonderful work of our own immortal minds. While we only seem to see or hear, we are thinking and feeling far beyond the mere notices given by the senses; and years afterwards we find that we have been laying up treasures, in our most heedless moments, of imagery, and connecting together trains of thought that arise in startling beauty, almost without cause or any traceable origin.

Awake but one—and lo! what myriads rise!

The pedestrian, too, must not only love his own society, but the society of any other human beings, if blameless and not impure, among whom his lot may for a short season be cast. He must rejoice in all the forms and shows of life, however simple they may be, however humble, however low; and be able to find food for his thoughts beside the ingle of the loneliest hut, where the inmates sit with few words, and will rather be spoken to than speak to the stranger. In such places he will be delighted—perhaps surprised—to find in uncorrupted strength, all the primary elements of human character. He will find that his knowledge may be wider than theirs, and better ordered, but that it rests on the same foundation, and comprehends the same matter. There will be no want of sympathies between him and them; and what he knows best, and loves most, will seldom fail to be that also which they listen to with greatest interest, and respecting which there is the closest communion between the minds of stranger and host. He may know

the courses of the stars according to the revelation of science—they may have studied them only as simple shepherds, “whose hearts were gladdened” walking on the mountain-top. But they know—as he does—who sowed the stars in heaven, and that their silent courses are all adjusted by the hand of the Most High.

Oh! blessed, thrice blessed years of youth! would we choose to live over again all your forgotten and forgotten nights and days! Blessed, thrice blessed we call you, although, as we then felt, often darkened almost into insanity by self-sown sorrows springing out of our very soul. No, we would not again face such trouble, not even for the glorious apparitions that familiarly haunted us in glens, and forests, on mountains, and on the great sea. But all, or nearly all, that did once so grievously disturb, we can lay in the depths of the past, so that scarcely a ghastly voice is heard, scarcely a ghastly face beheld; while all that so charmed of yore, or nearly all, although no longer the daily companions of our life, still survive to be recalled at solemn hours, and with a “beauty still more beauteous,” to reinvest the earth which neither sin nor sorrow can rob of its enchantments. We can still travel with the solitary mountain-stream, from its source to the sea, and see new visions at every vista of its winding way. The waterfall flows not with its own monotonous voice of a day or an hour, but like a choral anthem pealing with the hymns of many years! In the heart of the blind mist on the mountain-ranges we can now sit alone, surrounded by a world of images, over which time holds no power, but to consecrate or solemnize. Solitude we can deepen by a single volition, and by a single volition let in upon it the stir and noise of the world and life. Why, therefore, should we complain, or why lament the inevitable loss or change that time brings with it to all that breathe? Beneath the shadow of the tree we can yet repose, and tranquillize our spirit by its rustle, or by the “green light,” unchequered, by one stirring leaf. From sunrise to sunset, we can lie below the old mossy tower, till the darkness that shuts out the day, hides the visions that glided round the ruined battlements. Cheerful as in a city can we traverse

the houseless moor, and although not a ship be on the sea, we can set sail on the wings of imagination, and when wearied, sink down on savage or serene isle, and let drop our anchor below the moon and stars.

But we must pitch our key a little lower, that we may not be suspected of dealing in poetics; and, since we are pedestrians, walk along the level of common life. What pleasure, then, on this earth, transcends a breakfast after a twelve-mile walk? Or is there in this sublunary scene a delight superior to the gradual, dying-away, dreamy drowsiness, that, at the close of a long summer-day's journey up hill and down dale, seals up the glimmering eyes with honey-dew, and stretches out, under the loving hands of nourrice Nature, soft as snow, and warm as sunbeams, the whole elongated animated economy, steeped in rest divine, from the organ of veneration to the point of the great toe, be it on a bed of down, chaff, straw, or heather, in palace, hall, hotel, or hut? Nobody interferes with you in meddling officiousness; neither landlord, bagman, waiter, chamber-maid, boots;—you are left to yourself without being neglected. Your bell may not be emulously answered by all the menials on the establishment, but a smug or shock-headed drawer appears in good time; and if mine host may not always dignify your dinner by the deposition of the first dish, yet, influenced by the rumour that soon spreads through the premises, he bows farewell at your departure, with a shrewd suspicion that you are a nobleman in disguise; and such, for any thing we know to the contrary, you may be, and next to the Earl of Liverpool, the Bishop of Chester, the Marquis of Lansdown, and my Lord Lauderdale, the most conspicuous ornament of the Upper House.

A GLANCE OVER SELBY'S ORNITHOLOGY.

(Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, 1826.)

WHAT a splendid work! This is the kind of ornamental furniture, in which we, were we men of fortune, would delight. The tables in our passages, galleries, parlours, boudoirs, and drawing-rooms should groan—no, not groan—but smile, with suitably-bound volumes of Natural History, on the opening of any one of which, would suddenly gleam before us some rich and rare, some bright and beauteous, some wonderful and wild, some strange and fantastic, some fierce and terrible, some minute or mighty production of the great mother—Nature. But we are not men of fortune; and a magnificent folio like this would seem altogether out of its place among the permanent furniture of our sober-suited cell. Hither, notwithstanding, do such magnificent folios ever and anon find out their way, carried tenderly under the arm, or borne triumphantly on the shoulder, of some rich friend's confidential servant, wondering, as he ascends the spiral staircase, how many flats really go to the composition of such a house. Then the college library is at our service—for every year do we, like Dr. Nimmo, matriculate;—the stores of the Wernerian Society are open to us as a member of that flourishing institution; and not a bookseller in the city is reluctant to indulge us with a week's possession of the most costly and dazzling volumes, often for our own sakes, but oftener for the sake of THE MAN—whose friendship has been the chief blessing of our life—CHRISTOPHER NORTH.

What a treasure, for instance, during a rainy forenoon in the country, is such a gloriously illuminated work as this of Mr. Selby, to a small party uncertain in what spirit they shall woo the hours! Let them assemble

round a circular table, boy and virgin alternately taking seat, and let the most scientific undertake to illustrate the plates in a desultory lecture. As the professor proceeds, his audience will be inspired to speak by the delight of surprise and wonder—their own memories will supply them with many interesting anecdotes of the “gay creatures of the element,” and they will be pleased to discover how much of natural history is known to every intelligent and observant mind that has had any opportunities of living much among the woods and fields. Each individual in the circle—however limited the range of his experience—will have his own small—not insignificant—story to tell; a hint from one leads to a disquisition from another; the conversation becomes more erudite with the comparative biography of animals; and perhaps some female Bewick or Bingley may be there, who, with all the modesty of genius, in a voice soft as the light of her humble eyes, throws in a few discriminative touches of character, that bring out at once the nature of the creature contemplated, be it locust or leviathan, lamb or lion, eagle or dove.

Now and then it is our happy lot to take part in such conversaziones, with on each side a sweet docile maiden, commending our commentaries by a whisper or a smile; but at present we are all alone in our pensive citadel—not a mouse stirring, although it is midnight—the fire, when about to glimmer its last, restored to life by another mouthful of fuel—and our lamp, trimmed anew into a sort of spiritual lustre, seeming to enjoy the silence it illumines. That pure and steady light, which can be made to let fall its shadows as we will, is streaming on the plumage of phantom-birds, bright as the realities in the woods and on the mountains, and we shall beguile ourselves away into the solitary forest haunts, well pleased to be recalled by the rustle of the turning page, from our imaginary travels back again to the steadfastness of our beloved hearth,—“a dream within a dream!”

The GOLDEN EAGLE leads the van of our birds of prey—and there she sits in her usual carriage when in a state of rest. Her hunger and her thirst have been appeased—her wings are folded up in a dignified tranquillity—her

talons grasping a leafless branch, are almost hidden by the feathers of her breast—her sleepless eye has lost something of its ferocity—and the royal bird is almost serene in her solitary state on the cliff. The gorcock unalarmed crows among the moors and mosses—the blackbird whistles in the birken shaw—and the cony erects his ears at the mouth of his burrow, and whisks away frolicsome among the whins or heather.

There is no index to the hour—neither light nor shadow—no cloud. But from the composed aspect of the bird, we may suppose it to be the hush of evening after a day of successful foray by land and sea. The imps in the eyrie have been fed, and their hungry cry will not be heard till the dawn. The mother has there taken up her watchful rest, till in darkness she may glide up to her brood, and the sire is somewhere sitting within view among the rocks,—a sentinel whose eye, and ear, and nostril are true, in exquisite fineness of sense, to their trust, and on whom rarely, and as if by a miracle, can steal the adventurous shepherd or huntsman, to wreak vengeance with his rifle on the spoiler of sheep-walk and forest chase.

Yet sometimes it chanceth that the yellow lustre of her keen, wild, fierce eye is veiled, even in daylight, by the film of sleep. Perhaps sickness has been at the heart of the dejected bird, or fever wasted her wing. The sun may have smitten her, or the storm driven her against a rock. Then hunger and thirst,—which, in pride of plumage she scorned, and which only made her fiercer on the edge of her unfed eyrie, as she whetted her beak on the flint-stone, and clutched the strong heather-stalks in her talons, as if she were anticipating prey,—quell her courage, and in famine she eyes afar off the fowls she is unable to pursue, and with one stroke strike to earth. Her flight is heavier and heavier each succeeding day—she ventures not to cross the great glens, with or without lochs—but flaps her way from rock to rock on the same mountain-side—and finally drawn by her weakness into gradual descent, she is discovered by gray dawn far below the region of snow, assailed and insulted by the meanest carrion, and a bullet whizzing through her heart,

down she topples, and soon as she is despatched by blows from the rifle-butt, the shepherd stretches out his foe's carcase on the sward, eight feet from wing to wing.

But, lo! the character of the Golden Eagle, when she has pounced, and is exulting over her prey! With her head drawn back between the crescent of her uplifted wings, which she will not fold till that prey be devoured, eye glaring cruel joy, neck-plumage bristling, tail-feathers fan-spread, and talons driven through the victim's entrails and heart, there she is new-alighted on the ledge of a precipice, and fancy hears her yell and its echo. Beak and talons, all her life-long, have had a stain of blood, for the murderess observes no Sabbath, and seldom dips them in loch or sea, except when dashing down suddenly among the terrified water-fowl from her watch-tower in the sky. The week-old fawn had left the doe's side but for a momentary race along the edge of the coppice,—a rustle and a shadow,—and the burden is borne off to the cliffs of Benevis! In an instant the small animal is dead after a short exultation—torn into pieces—and by eagles and eaglets devoured, its disgorged bones mingle with those of many other creatures, encumbering the eyrie, and strewed around it over the bloody platform on which the young demons crawl forth to enjoy the sunshine.

O for the Life of an Eagle written by himself! It would outsell the Confessions of an English Opium-Eater; and how would it confound the critics of the Quarterly and Edinburgh Reviews! No editor but North could do justice to it in a leading article. Proudly would he, or she, write of birth and parentage. On the rock of ages he first opened his eyes to the sun, in noble instinct affronting and outstaring the light. The great glen of Scotland—hath it not been the inheritance of his ancestors for many thousand years? No polluting mixture of ignoble blood, from intermarriages of necessity with kite, buzzard, hawk, or falcon. No, the golden eagles of Glen-Falloch, surnamed the sun-starers, have formed alliances with the golden eagles of Cruachan, Benlawers, Shehalion, and Mar-Forest,—the lightning-glints, the flood-fallers, the storm-wheelers, the cloud-cleavers, ever since the flood. The education of the autobiographer had not

been intrusted to a private tutor. Parental eyes, beaks, and talons, provided sustenance for his infant frame ; and in that capacious eyrie, year after year repaired by dry branches from the desert, parental advice was yelled into him, meet for the expansion of his instinct as wide and wonderful as the reason of earth-crawling man. What a noble naturalist did he, in a single session at the College of the Cliff, become ! Of the customs, and habits, and haunts, of all inferior creatures, he speedily made himself master—those included, of man. Nor was his knowledge confined to theory, but reduced to daily practice. He kept himself in constant training—taking a flight of a hundred miles before breakfast—paying a forenoon visit to the farthest of the Hebride Isles, and returning to dinner in Glenco. In one day he has flown to Norway on a visit to his uncle by the mother's side, and returned the next to comfort his paternal uncle, lying sick at the Head of Dee. He soon learned to despise himself for once having yelled for food, when food was none ; and to sit or sail, on rock or through ether, athirst and an hungred, but mute. The virtues of patience, endurance, and fortitude, have become with him, in strict accordance with the Aristotelian moral philosophy—habits. A Peripatetic philosopher he could hardly be called—properly speaking, he belongs to the Solar School—an airy sect, who take very high ground, indulge in lofty flights, and are often lost in the clouds. Now and then a light chapter might be introduced, when he and other youngers of the blood royal took a game at high-jinks, or tourneyed in air-lists, the champions on opposite sides flying from the Perthshire and from the Argyleshire mountains, and encountering with a clash in the azure common, six thousand feet high ! But the fever of love burned in his blood, and flying to the mountains of another continent, in obedience to the yell of an old oral tradition, he wooed and won his virgin-bride—a monstrous beauty, wider-winged than himself, to kill or caress, and bearing the proof of her noble nativity, in that radiant iris that belongs in perfection of fierceness but to the sun-starers, and in them is found, unimpaired by cloudiest clime, over the uttermost parts of the earth. The bridegroom and his

bride, during the honeymoon, slept on the naked rock—till they had built their eyrie beneath its cliff-canopy on the mountain-brow. When the bride was, “as eagles wish to be who love their lords,”—devoted unto her was the bridegroom, even as the cushat murmuring to his brooding mate in the central pine-grove of a forest. Tenderly did he drop from his talons, close beside her beak, the delicate spring-lamb, or the too early leveret, owing to the hurried and imprudent marriage of its parents before March, buried in a living tomb ere April's initial day. Through all thy glens, Albin! hadst thou reason to mourn, at the bursting of the shells that queen-bird had been cherishing beneath her bosom! Aloft in heaven wheeled the royal pair, from rising to setting sun. Among the bright-blooming heather they espied the tartan'd shepherd, or hunter creeping like a lizard, and from behind the vain shadow of a rock, watching with his rifle the flight he would fain see shorn of its beams. The flocks were thinned—and the bleating of desolate dams among the fleecy people heard from many a brae. Poison was strewn over the glens for their destruction, but the eagle, like the lion, preys not on carcasses; and the shepherd dogs howled in agony over the carrion in which they devoured death. Ha! was not that a day of triumph to the sun-starers of Cruachan, when sky-hunting in couples, far down on the green-sward before the ruined gateway of Kilchurn Castle, they saw, left all to himself in the sunshine, the infant-heir of the Campbell of Breadalbane, the child of the Lord of Glenorchy and all its streams! Four talons in an instant were in his heart. Too late were the outcries from all the turrets, for ere the castle-gates were flung open, the golden head of the noble babe was lying in gore, in the eyrie on the iron ramparts of Gleno—his blue eyes dug out—his rosy cheeks torn—and his brains dropping from beaks that revelled yelling within the skull!—Such are a few hints for “Some Passages in the Life of the Golden Eagle, written by Himself,”—in one volume crown octavo—Blackwood, Edinburgh—Cadell, London.

O heavens and earth—forests and barn-yards! what a difference with a distinction between a GOLDEN EAGLE

and a GREEN GOOSE! There, all neck and bottom, splayed-footed, and hissing in miserable imitation of a serpent, lolling from side to side, up and down like an ill-trimmed punt, the downy gosling waddles through the green mire, and, imagining that King George the Fourth is meditating mischief against him, cackles angrily as he plunges into the pond. No swan that "on still St. Mary's lake floats double, swan and shadow," so proud as he! He prides himself on being a gander, and never forgets the lesson instilled into him by his parents soon as he chipt the shell in the nest among the nettles, that his ancestors saved the Roman Capitol. In process of time, in company with swine, he grazes on the common, and insults the Egyptians in their roving camp. Then comes the season of plucking—and this very pen bears testimony to his tortures. Out into the houseless winter is he driven—and, if he escapes being frozen into a lump of fat ice, he is crammed till his liver swells into a four-pounder—his cerebellum is cut by the cruel knife of a phrenological cook, and his remains buried with a cerement of apple sauce in the paunches of apoplectic aldermen, eating against each other at a civic feast! Such are a few hints for "Some Passages in the Life of a Green Goose," written by himself—in foolscap octavo—published by Hunt and Clarke, Cockaigne, and sold by all booksellers in town and country.

O beautiful and beloved Highland parish! in what district of the West I shall not say—for the wild passions of my youth, so charged with bliss and bale, have rendered thy name a sound that my soul hears at all times, even when silent and unpronounced—O beautiful and beloved Highland parish! in whose dashing glens my beating heart first felt the awe of solitude, and learned to commune (alas! to what purpose!) with the tumult of its own thoughts! The circuit of thy skies, when they were blue, "so darkly, deeply, beautifully blue," was indeed a glorious arena spread over the mountain-tops for the combats of the great birds of prey! One wild cry or another was in the lift,—of the hawk, or the glead, or the raven, or the eagle,—or when those fiends slept, of the peaceful heron, and sea-bird by wandering boys pursued

in its easy flight, till the snow-white child of ocean wavered away far inland, as if in search of a steadfast happiness unknown on the restless waves! Seldom did the eagle stoop to the challenge of the inferior fowl; but when he did, it was like a mailed knight, treading down unknown men in battle. The hawks, and the gleans, and the ravens, and the carrion-crows, and the hooded-crows, and the rooks, and the magpies, and all the rest of the rural militia, forgetting their own feuds, sometimes came sallying from all quarters, with even a few facetious jackdaws from the old castle, to show fight with the monarch of the air. Amidst all that multitude of wings winnowing the wind, was heard the sough and the whizz of those mighty vans, as the royal bird, himself an army, performed his majestic evolutions with all the calm confidence of a master in the art of aerial war, now soaring half-a-thousand feet perpendicularly, and now suddenly plumb-down into the rear of the croaking, cawing, and chattering battalions, cutting off their retreat to the earth. Then the rout became general, the wounded and missing, however, far outnumbering the dead. Keeping possession of the field of battle, hung the eagle for a short while motionless—till with one fierce yell of triumph, he seemed to seek the sun, and disappear like a speck in the light, surveying half of Scotland at a glance, and a thousand of her isles.

Some people have a trick of describing incidents as having happened within their own observation, when, in fact, they were at the time lying asleep in bed, and disturbing the whole house with the snore of their dormitory. Such is too often the character of the eye-witnesses of the present age. Now, I would not claim personal acquaintance with an incident I had not seen—no, not for fifty guineas per sheet; and, therefore, I warn the reader not to believe the following little story about an eagle and child (by the way, that is the Derby crest, and a favourite sign of inns in the north of England,) on the alleged authority of the writer of this article. "I tell the tale as 'twas told to me," by the schoolmaster of the parish alluded to above, and if the incident never occurred, then must he have been one of the greatest and most gratuitous

of liars that ever taught the young idea how to shoot. For my single self, I am by nature credulous. Many extraordinary things happen in this life, and though "seeing is believing," so likewise "believing is seeing," as every one must allow who reads the following pages of this Magazine.

Almost all the people in the parish were leading in their meadow-hay (there were not in all its ten miles square twenty acres of rye-grass) on the same day of midsummer, so drying was the sunshine and the wind,—and huge heaped-up wains, that almost hid from view the horses that drew them along the sward, beginning to get green with second growth, were moving in all directions towards the snug farm-yards. Never had the parish seemed before so populous. Jocund was the balmy air with laughter, whistle, and song. But the tree-gnomons threw the shadow of "one o'clock" on the green dial-face of the earth—the horses were unyoked, and took instantly to grazing—groups of men, women, lads, lasses, and children, collected under grove, and bush, and hedgerow—graces were pronounced, some of them rather too tedious in presence of the mantling milk-cans, bullion-bars of butter, and crackling cakes; and the great Being who gave them that day their daily bread, looked down from his eternal throne, well-pleased with the piety of his thankful creatures.

The great Golden Eagle, the pride and the pest of the parish, stooped down, and away with something in his talons. One single sudden female shriek—and then shouts and outcries as if a church spire had tumbled down on a congregation at a sacrament! "Hannah Lamond's bairn! Hannah Lamond's bairn!" was the loud fast-spreading cry. "The eagle's ta'en aff Hannah Lamond's bairn!" and many hundred feet were in another instant hurrying towards the mountain. Two miles, of hill, and dale, and copse, and shingle, and many intersecting brooks lay between; but in an incredibly short time, the foot of the mountain was alive with people. The cyrie was well known, and both old birds were visible on the rock-ledge. But who shall scale that dizzy cliff, which Mark Steuart the sailor, who had been at the storming of many a fort,

attempted in vain! All kept gazing, weeping, wringing of hands in vain, rooted to the ground, or running back and forwards, like so many ants essaying their new wings in discomfiture. "What's the use—what's the use o' any pur human means? We have no power but in prayer!" and many knelt down—fathers and mothers thinking of their own babies—as if they would force the deaf heavens to hear!

Hannah Lamond had all this while been sitting on a rock, with a face perfectly white, and eyes like those of a mad person, fixed on the eyrie. Nobody had noticed her; for strong as all sympathies with her had been at the swoop of the eagle, they were now swallowed up in the agony of eyesight. "Only last Sabbath was my sweet wee wean baptized in the name o' the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost!" and on uttering these words, she flew off through the brakes and over the huge stones, up—up—up—faster than ever huntsman ran in to the death,—fearless as a goat playing among the precipices. No one doubted, no one could doubt, that she would soon be dashed to pieces. But have not people who walk in their sleep, obedient to the mysterious guidance of dreams, clomb the walls of old ruins, and found footing, even in decrepitude, along the edge of unguarded battlements, and down dilapidated stair-cases, deep as draw-wells, or coal-pits, and returned with open, fixed, and unseeing eyes, unharmed to their beds, at midnight? It is all the work of the soul, to whom the body is a slave; and shall not the agony of a mother's passion—who sees her baby whose warm mouth had just left her breast, hurried off by a demon to a hideous death—bear her limbs aloft wherever there is dust to dust, till she reach that devouring den, and fiercer and more furious far, in the passion of love, than any bird of prey that ever bathed its beak in blood, throttle the fiends that with their heavy wings would fain flap her down the cliffs, and hold up her child in deliverance before the eye of the all-seeing God!

No stop—no stay,—she knew not that she drew her breath. Beneath her feet Providence fastened every loose stone, and to her hands strengthened every root. How was she ever to descend? That fear, then, but once

crossed her heart, as up—up—up—to the little image made of her own flesh and blood. “The God who holds me now from perishing—will not the same God save me when my child is on my bosom?” Down came the fierce rushing of the eagles’ wings—each savage bird dashing close to her head, so that she saw the yellow of their wrathful eyes. All at once they quailed, and were cowed. Yelling they flew off to the stump of an ash jutting out of a cliff, a thousand feet above the cataract, and the Christian mother falling across the eyrie, in the midst of bones and blood, clasped her child—dead—dead—dead—no doubt—but unmangled and untorn, and swaddled up just as it was when she laid it down asleep among the fresh hay in a nook of the harvest field. Oh! what pang of perfect blessedness transfixed her heart from that faint feeble cry,—“It lives—it lives—it lives!” and baring her bosom, with loud laughter, and eyes dry as stones, she felt the lips of the unconscious innocent once more murmuring at the fount of life and love! “O thou great and thou dreadful God! whither hast thou brought me—one of the most sinful of thy creatures? Oh! save my soul, lest it perish, even for thy own name’s sake! Oh thou, who diedst to save sinners, have mercy upon me!” Cliffs, chasms, blocks of stone, and the skeletons of old trees—far—far down—and dwindled into specks, a thousand creatures of her own kind, stationary, or running to and fro! Was that the sound of the waterfall, or the faint roar of voices? Is that her native strath?—and that tuft of trees, does it contain the hut in which stands the cradle of her child? Never more shall it be rocked by her foot! Here must she die—and when her breast is exhausted, her baby too! And those horrid beaks, and eyes, and talons, and wings, will return, and her child will be devoured at last, even within the dead bosom that can protect it no more.

Where all this while was Mark Steuart the sailor? Half-way up the cliffs. But his eye had got dim, and his head dizzy, and his heart sick—and he who had so often reefed the topgallant sail, when at midnight the coming of the gale was heard afar, covered his face with his hands, and dared look no longer on the swimming heights,

“And who will take care of my poor bedridden mother,” thought Hannah, whose soul, through the exhaustion of so many passions, could no more retain in its grasp that hope which it had clutched in despair. A voice whispered, “God.” She looked around expecting to see an angel—but nothing moved except a rotten branch, that, under its own weight, broke off from the crumbling rock. Her eye—by some secret sympathy of her soul with the inanimate object—watched its fall; and it seemed to stop, not far off, on a small platform. Her child was bound within her bosom—she remembered not how or when—but it was safe—and scarcely daring to open her eyes, she slid down the shelving rocks, and found herself on a small piece of firm root-bound soil, with the tops of bushes appearing below. With fingers suddenly strengthened into the power of iron, she swung herself down by briar, and broom, and heather, and dwarf-birch. There, a loosened stone leapt over a ledge and no sound was heard, so profound was its fall. There, the shingle rattled down the screes, and she hesitated not to follow. Her feet bounded against the huge stone that stopped them, but she felt no pain. Her body was callous as the cliff. Steep as the wall of a house was now the side of the precipice. But it was matted with ivy centuries old—long ago dead, and without a single green leaf—but with thousands of arm-thick stems petrified into the rock, and covering it as with a trellis. She bound her baby to her neck—and with hands and feet clung to that fearful ladder. Turning round her head and looking down, lo! the whole population of the parish—so great was the multitude, on their knees! and, hush, the voice of psalms! a hymn breathing the spirit of one united prayer! Sad and solemn was the strain—but nothing dirge-like—breathing not of death but deliverance. Often had she sung that tune, perhaps the very words, but then she heard not—in her own hut, she and her mother—or in the kirk, along with all the congregation. An unseen hand seemed fastening her fingers to the ribs of ivy, and in sudden inspiration believing that her life was to be saved, she became almost as fearless as if she had been changed into a winged creature. Again her feet touched

stones and earth—the psalm was hushed—but a tremulous sobbing voice was close beside her, and lo! a she-goat, with two little kids at her feet! “Wild heights,” thought she, “do these creatures climb—but the dam will lead down her kid by the easiest paths, for oh! even in the brute creatures what is the holy power of a mother’s love!” and turning round her head, she kissed her sleeping baby, and for the first time she wept.

Overhead frowned the front of the precipice, never touched before by human hand or foot. No one had ever dreamt of scaling it, and the golden eagles knew that well in their instinct, as, before they built their eyrie, they had brushed it with their wings. But all the rest of this part of the mountain-side, though scarred, and seamed, and chasmed, was yet accessible—and more than one person in the parish had reached the bottom of the Glead’s Cliff. Many were now attempting it—and ere the cautious mother had followed her dumb guides a hundred yards, though among dangers that, although enough to terrify the stoutest heart, were traversed by her without a shudder, the head of one man appeared, and then the head of another, and she knew that God had delivered her and her child in safety, into the care of their fellow-creatures. Not a word was spoken—eyes said enough—she hushed her friends with her hands—and with uplifted eyes pointed to the guides sent to her by Heaven. Small green plats where those creatures nibble the wild-flowers, became now more frequent—trodden lines, almost as easy as sheep-paths, showed that the dam had not led her young into danger; and now the brush-wood dwindled away into straggling shrubs, and the party stood on a little eminence above the stream, and forming part of the strath.

There had been trouble and agitation, much sobbing, and many tears, among the multitude, while the mother was scaling the cliffs—sublime was the shout that echoed afar the moment she reached the eyrie—then had succeeded a silence deep as death—in a little while arose that hymning prayer, succeeded by mute supplication—the wildness of thankful and congratulatory joy had next its sway—and now that her salvation was sure, the great

crowd rustled like a wind-swept wood. And for whose sake was all this alternation of agony? A poor humble creature, unknown to many even by name—one who had but few friends, nor wished for more—contented to work all day, here—there—any where—that she might be able to support her aged mother and her little child—and who on Sabbath took her seat in an obscure pew, set apart for paupers, in the kirk!

“Fall back, and give her fresh air,” said the old minister of the parish; and the circle of close faces widened round her lying as in death. “Gie me the bonny bit bairn into my arms,” cried first one mother and then another, and it was tenderly handed round the circle of kisses, many of the snooded maidens bathing its face in tears. “There’s no a single scratch about the puir innocent, for the eagle you see maun hae stuck its talons into the lang claes and the shawl. Blin’, blin’ maun they be who see not the finger o’ God in this thing!”

Hannah started up from her swoon—and looking wildly round, cried, “Oh!—the bird—the bird!—the eagle—the eagle!—the eagle has carried off my bonny wee Walter—is there nane to pursue?” A neighbour put her baby into her breast, and shutting her eyes, and smiting her forehead, the sorely bewildered creature said in a low voice, “Am I wauken—oh! tell me if I’m wauken—or if a’ this be the wark o’ a fever, and the delirium o’ a dream?”

Hannah Lamond was not yet twenty years old—and although she was a mother—and you may guess what a mother—yet—frown not, fair and gentle reader—frown not, pure and stainless as thou art—to her belonged not the sacred name of wife—and that baby was the child of sin and of shame—yes—“the child of misery, baptized in tears!” She had loved—trusted—been betrayed—and deserted. In sorrow and solitude—uncomforted and despised—she bore her burthen. Dismal had been the hour of travail—and she feared her mother’s heart would have broken, even when her own was cleft in twain. But how healing is forgiveness—alike to the wounds of the forgiving and the forgiven! And then Hannah knew that although guilty before God, her guilt was not such as her

fellow-creatures deemed it—for oh! there were dreadful secrets which should never pass her lips against the father of her child! so she bowed down her young head—and soiled it with the ashes of repentance—walking with her eyes on the ground as she again entered the kirk—yet not fearing to lift them up to heaven during the prayer. Her sadness inspired a general pity—she was excluded from no house she had heart to visit—no coarse comment—no ribald jest accompanied the notice people took of her baby—no licentious rustic presumed on her frailty, for the pale, melancholy face of the nursing mother, weeping as she sung the lullaby, forbade all such approach—and an universal sentiment of indignation drove from the parish the heartless and unprincipled seducer—if all had been known, too weak word for his crime—who left thus to pine in sorrow—and in shame far worse than sorrow—one, who, till her unhappy fall, had been held up by every mother as an example to her daughters, of sense and modesty—and the meek unpretending piety of a Christian faith!

Never—never once had she striven to cease to love her betrayer—but she had striven—and an appeased conscience had enabled her to do so—to think not of him now that he had deserted her for ever. Sometimes his image, as well in love as in wrath, passed before the eye of her heart—but she closed it in tears of blood, and the phantom disappeared. Thus all the love towards him that slept—but was not dead—arose in yearnings of still more exceeding love towards his child. Round its head was gathered all hope of comfort—of peace—of reward of her repentance. One of its smiles was enough to brighten up the darkness of the future. In her breast—on her knee—in its cradle, she regarded it with a perpetual prayer. And this feeling it was, with all the overwhelming tenderness of affection, all the invigorating power of passion, that, under the hand of God, bore her up and down that fearful mountain's brow, and after the hour of rescue and deliverance, stretched her on the greensward like a corpse.

The rumour of the miracle soon circled the mountain's base, and a strange story without names was told to the

wood-ranger of the Cairn forest, by a wayfaring man. Anxious to know what truth there was in it, he crossed the hill, and making his way through the sullen crowd, went up to the eminence, and beheld, just recovering from her final swoon, her whom he had so wickedly ruined, and so basely deserted. Hisses, and groans, and hootings, and fierce eyes, and clenched hands, assailed and threatened him on every side.

His heart died within him, not in fear, but in remorse. What a worm he felt himself to be, and fain would he have been to become a worm, that, to escape all that united human scorn, he might have wriggled away in slime into some hole of the earth! But the meek eye of Hannah met his in perfect forgiveness—a tear of pity—a faint smile of love. All his better nature rose within him, all his worse nature was quelled. “Yes, good people, you do right to cover me with your scorn. But what is your scorn to the wrath of God? The Evil One has often been with me in the woods; the same voice that once whispered me to murder her—but here I am—not to offer retribution—for that may not—will not—must not be—guilt must not mate with innocence. But here I proclaim that innocence. I deserve death, and I am willing here, on this spot, to deliver myself into the hands of justice. Allan Calder—I call on you to seize your prisoner.”

The moral sense of the people, when instructed by knowlegde and enlightened by religion, what else is it but the voice of God! Their anger subsided at once into a serene satisfaction—and that soon softened, in sight of her who, alone aggrieved, alone felt nothing but tenderest forgiveness, into a confused compassion for the man who, bold and bad as he had been, had undergone many solitary torments, and nearly fallen in his unaccompanied misery into the power of the Prince of Darkness. The old clergyman, whom all revered, put the contrite man's hand in hers, whom he swore to love and cherish all his days—and, ere summer was over, Hannah was the mistress of a family, in a house not much inferior to a Manse. Her mother, now that not only her daughter's reputation was freed from stain, but her innocence also proved, renewed her youth. And although the worthy

schoolmaster, who told me the tale so much better than I have been able to repeat it, confessed that the wood-ranger never became altogether a saint—nor acquired the edifying habit of pulling down the corners of his mouth, and turning up the whites of his eyes—yet he assured me, that he never afterwards heard any thing very seriously to his prejudice—that he became in due time an elder of the Kirk—gave his children a religious education—erring only in making rather too much of a pet of his oldest born, whom, even when grown up to manhood, he never called by any other name than the Eaglet.

Let us shut the volume, and reopen it at hap-hazard. We have been fortunate in the plate, and so has Mr. Selby.—The RAVEN! In a solitary glen sits down on a stone the roaming pedestrian, beneath the hush and gloom of a thundery sky, that has not yet begun to growl, and hears no sounds but that of an occasional big rain-drop plashing on the bare bent; the crag high over head sometimes utters a sullen groan,—the pilgrim, starting, listens, and the noise is repeated, but instead of a groan, a croak—croak—croak! manifestly from a thing with life. A pause of silence! And hollower and hoarser the croak is heard from the opposite side of the glen. Eyeing the black sultry heaven, he feels the warm splash on his face, but sees no bird on the wing. By and by, something black lifts itself slowly and heavily up from a precipice, in deep shadow; and before it has cleared the rock-range, and entered the upper region of air, he knows it to be the Raven. The creature seems wroth to be disturbed in his solitude, and in his strong straight-forward flight, aims at the head of another glen; but he wheels round at the iron barrier, and alighting among the heather, folds his huge massy wings, and leaps about in anger, with the same savage croak—croak—croak! No other bird so like a demon;—and should you chance to break a leg in the desert, and be unable to crawl to a hut, your life is not worth twenty-four hours purchase. Never was there a single hound in all Lord Darlington's packs, since his lordship became a mighty hunter, with nostrils so fine as those of that feathered fiend, covered though they be, with strong hairs or bristles, that grimly adorn a bill of formi-

dable dimensions, and apt for digging out eye-socket, and splitting skull-suture, of dying man or beast. That bill cannot tear in pieces like the eagle's beak, nor are its talons so powerful to smite as to compress,—but a better bill for cut-and-thrust—push, carte, and tierce—the dig dismal, and the plunge profound—belongs to no other bird. It inflicts great gashes; nor needs the wound to be repeated on the same spot. Feeder foul and obscene! to thy nostril upturned “into the murky air, sagacious of thy quarry from afar,” sweeter is the scent of carrion, than to the panting lover's sense and soul the fragrance of his own virgin's breath and bosom, when, lying in her innocence in his arms, her dishevelled tresses seem laden with something more etherially pure, than “Sabeian odours from the spicy shores of Araby the Blest.”

The raven dislikes all animal food that has not a deathly smack. It cannot be thought that he has any reverence or awe of the mystery of life. Neither is he a coward; at least, not such a coward as to fear the dying kick of a lamb or sheep. Yet so long as his victim can stand, or sit, or lie in a strong struggle, the raven keeps aloof—hopping in a circle that narrows and narrows as the sick animal's nostrils keep dilating in convulsions, and its eyes grow dimmer and more dim. When the prey is in the last agonies, croaking, he leaps upon the breathing, carcase, and whets his bill upon his own blue-ringed legs, steadied by claws in the fleece, yet not so fiercely inserted as to get entangled and fast. With his large level-crowned head bobbing up and down, and turned a little first to one side, and then to another, all the while a self-congratulatory leer in his eye, he unfolds his wings, and then folds them again, twenty or thirty times, as if dubious how to begin to gratify his lust of blood; and frequently when just on the brink of consummation, jumps off the side, back, or throat, and goes dallying about, round and round and off to a small safe distance, scenting, almost snorting, the smell of the blood running cold, colder, and more cold. At last the poor wretch is still; and then, without waiting till it is stiff, he goes to work earnestly and passionately, and taught by horrid instinct how to reach the entrails, revels in obscene gluttony, and preserves it may be, eye,

lip, palate, and brain, for the last course of his meal, gorged to the throat, incapacitated to return thanks, and with difficulty able either to croak or to fly!

The raven, it is thought, is in the habit of living upwards of a hundred years, perhaps a couple of centuries. Children grow into girls, girls into maidens, maidens into wives, wives into widows, widows into old decrepit crones, and crones into dust; and the raven, who wons at the head of the glen, is aware of all the births, baptisms, marriages, death-beds, and funerals. Certain it is, at least, that he is aware of the death-beds and the funerals. Often does he flap his wings against door and window of hut, when the wretch within is in extremity, or, sitting on the heather-roof, croaks horror into the dying dream. As the funeral winds its way towards the mountain cemetery, he hovers aloft in the air—or swooping down nearer to the bier, precedes the corpse like a sable sauley. While the party of friends are carousing in the house of death, he too, scorning funeral baked meats, croaks hoarse hymns and dismal dirges as he is devouring the pet lamb of the little grandchild of the deceased. The shepherds say that the raven is sometimes heard to laugh. Why not, as well as the hyena? Then it is, that he is most diabolical, for he knows that his laughter is prophetic of human death. True it is, and it would be injustice to conceal the fact, much more to deny it, that ravens of old fed Elijah; but that was the punishment of some old sin committed by two, who before the flood bore the human shape; and who, soon as the ark rested on Mount Ararat, flew off to the desolation of swamped forests and the disfigured solitude of the drowned glens. Dying ravens hide themselves from daylight in burial places among the rocks, and are seen hobbling into their tombs, as if driven thither by a flock of fears, and crouching under a remorse that disturbs instinct, even as if it were conscience. So sings and says the Celtic superstition—adding that there are raven ghosts, great black bundles of feathers, for ever in the forest night-hunting, in famine, for prey, emitting a last feeble croak at the blush of dawn, and then all at once invisible.

There can be no doubt that that foolish Quaker, who some twenty years ago perished at the foot of a crag near

Red Tarn, "far in the bosom of Helvyllyn," was devoured by ravens. We call him foolish, because no adherent of that sect was ever qualified to find his way among mountains, when the winter day was short, and the snow deep, wreathed, and pit-falled. In such season and weather, no place so fit for a Quaker as the fireside. Not to insist, however, on that point, with what glee the few hungry and thirsty old ravens belonging to the Red Tarn Club must have flocked to the ordinary! Without asking each other to which part this, that, or the other croaker chose to be helped, the maxim which regulated their behaviour at table was doubtless, "every bird for himself, and God for us all!" Forthwith each bill was busy, and the scene became animated in the extreme. There must have been great difficulty to the most accomplished of the carrion in stripping the Quaker of his drab. The broad brim had probably escaped with the first intention, and after going before the wind half across the unfrozen Tarn, capsized, filled, and sunk. Picture to yourself so many devils, all in glossy black feather coats and dark grey breeches, with waistcoats inclining to blue, pully-hawleying away at the unresisting figure of the follower of Fox, and getting first vexed and then irritated with the pieces of choking soft armour in which, five or six ply thick, his inviting carcass was so provokingly insheathed! First a drab duffle cloak—then a drab wrap-rascal—then a drab broad-cloth coat, made in the oldest fashion—then a drab waistcoat of the same—then a drab under-waistcoat of thinner mould—then a linen shirt, somewhat drabbish—then a flannel shirt, entirely so, and most odorous to the nostrils of the members of the Red Tarn Club. All this must have taken a couple of days at the least; so supposing the majority of members assembled about 8 A. M. on the Sabbath morning, it must have been well on to twelve o'clock on Monday night before the club could have comfortably sat down to supper. During these two denuding days, we can well believe that the president must have been hard put to it to keep the secretary, treasurer, chaplain, and other office-bearers, ordinary and extraordinary members, from giving a sly dig at Obadiah's face, so tempting in the fallow hue and rank smell

of first corruption. Dead bodies keep well in frost; but the subject had in this case probably fallen from a great height, had his bones broken to smash, his flesh bruised and mangled. The president, therefore, we repeat it, even although a raven of great age and authority, must have had inconceivable difficulty in controlling the club. The croak of "Order!—order!—Chair!—chair!"—must have been frequent; and had the office not been hereditary, the old gentleman would no doubt have thrown it up, and declared the chair vacant. All obstacles and obstructions being by indefatigable activity removed, no attempt was made by the seneschal to place the guests according to their rank, above or below the salt, and the party sat promiscuously down to a late supper. Not a word was uttered during the first half hour, till a queer-looking mortal, who had spent several years of his prime of bird-hood at old Calgarth, and picked up a tolerable command of the Westmoreland dialect, by means of the Hamiltonian system, exclaimed, "I'se weel nee brussen'—there be's Mister Wudsworth—Ho, ho, ho!" It was indeed the bard, benighted in the excursion from Patterdale to Jobson's Cherry Tree: and the Red Tarn Club, afraid of having their orgies put into blank verse, sailed away in floating fragments beneath the moon and stars.

But over the doom of one true lover of Nature, let me shed a flood of my most rueful tears, for at what tale shall mortal man weep, if not at the tale of youthful genius and virtue shrouded suddenly in a winding-sheet wreathed of snow by the midnight tempest! Elate in the joy of solitude, he hurried like a fast-travelling shadow into the silence of the frozen mountains, all beautifully encrusted with pearls, and jewels, and diamonds, beneath the resplendent night-heavens. The din of populous cities had long stunned his brain, and his soul had sickened in the presence of the money-hunting eyes of selfish men, all madly pursuing their multifarious machinations in the great mart of commerce. The very sheeted masts of ships, bearing the flags of foreign countries, in all their pomp and beauty sailing homeward, or outward-bound, had become hateful to his spirit—for what were they but the floating enginery of Mammon? Truth, integrity,

honour, were all recklessly sacrificed to gain by the friends he loved and respected most, sacrificed without shame and without remorse—repentance being with them a repentance only over ill-laid schemes of villany, and plans for the ruination of widows and orphans, blasted in the bud of their iniquity. The brother of his bosom made him a bankrupt—and for a year the jointure of his widow-mother was unpaid. But she died before the second Christmas—and he was left alone in the world. Poor indeed he was, but not a beggar. A legacy came to him from a distant relation—almost the only one of his name—who died abroad. Small as it was, it was enough to live on—and his enthusiastic spirit gathering joy from distress, vowed to dedicate itself in some profound solitude to the love of Nature, and the study of her great laws. He bade an eternal farewell to cities, at the dead of midnight, beside his mother's grave, scarcely distinguishable among the thousand flat stones, sunk, or sinking into the wide churchyard, along which a great thoroughfare of life roared like the sea. And now, for the first time, his sorrow flung from him like a useless garment, he found himself alone among the Cumbrian mountains, and impelled in strong idolatry almost to kneel down and worship the divine beauty of the moon, and "stars that are the poetry of Heaven."

Not uninstructed was the wanderer in the lore that links the human heart to the gracious form and aspects of the mighty Mother. In early youth he had been intended for the Church, and subsequent years of ungrateful toils had not extinguished that fine scholarship, that a native aptitude for learning had acquired in the humble school of the village in which he was born. He had been ripe for college, when the sudden death of his father, who had long been at the head of a great mercantile concern, imposed it upon him as a sacred duty owed to his mother and his sisters, to embark in trade. Not otherwise could he hope ever to retrieve their fortunes—and for ten years for their sake he was a slave, till ruin set him free. Now he was master of his own destiny—and sought some humble hut in that magnificent scenery, where he might pass a blameless life, and among earth's purest joys, pre-

pare his soul for heaven. Many such humble huts had he seen during that one bold, bright, beautiful winter-day. Each wreath of smoke from the breathing chimneys, while the huts themselves seemed hardly awakened from sleep in the morning-calm, led his imagination up into the profound peace of the sky. In any one of those dwellings, peeping from sheltered dells, or perched on wind-swept eminences, could he have taken up his abode, and sat down contented at the board of their simple inmates. But in the very delirium of a new bliss, the day faded before him—twilight looked lovelier than dream-land, in the reflected glimmer of the snow—and thus had midnight found him, in a place so utterly lonesome in its remoteness from all habitations, that even in summer no stranger sought it without the guidance of some shepherd familiar with the many bewildering passes, that stretched away in all directions through among the mountains to distant vales. No more fear or thought had he of being lost in the wilderness, than the ring-dove that flies from forest to forest in the winter season, and, without the aid even of vision, trusts to the instinctive wafting of her wings through the paths of ether.

As he continued gazing on the heavens, the moon all at once lost something of her brightness—the stars seemed fewer in number—and the lustre of the rest as by mist obscured. The blue ethereal frame grew discoloured with streaks of red and yellow—and a sort of dim darkness deepened and deepened on the air, while the mountains appeared higher, and at the same time farther off, as if he had been transported in a dream to another region of the earth. A sound was heard, made up of far mustering winds, echoes from caves, swinging of trees, and the murmur as of a great lake or sea beginning to break on the shore. A few flakes of snow touched his face, and the air grew cold. A clear tarn had a few minutes before glittered with moonbeams, but now it had disappeared. Sleet came thicker and faster, and ere long it was a storm of snow. “Oh! God! my last hour is come!” and scarcely did he hear his own voice in the roaring tempest.

Men have died in dungeons—and their skeletons been

found long years afterwards lying on the stone-floor, in postures that told through what hideous agonies they had passed into the world of spirits. But no eye saw, no ear heard, and the prison-visiter gathers up, as he shudders, but a dim conviction of some long horror from the bones. One day in spring—long after the snows were melted—except here and there a patch like a flock of sheep on some sunless exposure—a huge raven rose heavily, as if gorged with prey, before the feet of a shepherd, who, going forward to the spot where the bird had been feeding, beheld a rotting corpse! A dog, itself almost a skeleton, was lying near, and began to whine at his approach. On its collar was the name of its master—now one heap of corruption. It was a name unknown in that part of the country—and weeks elapsed before any person could be heard of that could tell the history of the sufferer. A stranger came and went—taking the faithful creature with him that had so long watched by the dead—but long before his arrival the remains had been interred in the churchyard of Patterdale; and you may see the grave, a little way on from the south gate, on your right hand as you enter, not many yards from the great yew-tree.

Gentle reader! we have given you two versions of the same story,—and, pray, which do you like the best? The first is the most funny, the second the most affecting. We have observed, that the critics are not decided on the question of our merits as a writer; some maintaining, that we are strongest in humour; others, that our power is in pathos. The judicious declare that our forte lies in both,—in the two united, or alternating with each other. “But is it not quite shocking,” exclaims some Cockney, who has been knouted in *Ebony*, “to hear so very serious an affair as the death of a Quaker in the snow among mountains, treated with such heartless levity, as it is in a contemptible article in *Blackwood*, called ‘A Glance over Selby’s Ornithology?’ The man who wrote that description, sir, of the ordinary of the Red Tarn Club, would not scruple to commit murder!” Why, if killing a Cockney be murder, the writer of that—this—article confesses that he has more than once committed that capital crime. But no intelligent jury, who took into

consideration the laws as well as the fact,—and it is often their duty to do so, let high authorities say what they will,—would for a moment hesitate, in any of the cases alluded to, to bring in a verdict of “justifiable homicide.” The gentleman or lady who has honoured us so far with perusal, knows enough of human life, and of their own hearts, to know also, that there is no other subject which men of genius—and who ever denied that we are men of genius?—have been accustomed to view in so many ludicrous lights as this same subject of death; and the reason is at once obvious—yet *recherchée*—*videlicet*, death is in itself, and all that belongs to it, such a sad, cold, wild, dreary, dismal, distracting, and dreadful thing, that men will laugh!

But a truce with critical discussion, and let us remember, what we are always forgetting, that the title of this article is, “A Glance over Selby’s Ornithology.” Too-hoo—too-hoo—too-whit-too-hoo!—we have got among the owls. Venerable personages, in truth, they are,—perfect Solomons!—The spectator, as in most cases of very solemn characters, feels himself at first strongly disposed to commit the gross indecorum of bursting out a-laughing in their face. One does not see the absolute necessity either of man or bird looking at all times so unaccountably wise. Why will an owl persist in his stare? Why will a bishop never lay aside his wig?

People ignorant of ornithology will stare like the bird of wisdom himself on being told that an owl is an eagle. Yet, bating a little inaccuracy, it is so. Eagles, kites, hawks, and owls, all belong to the genus *falco*. We hear a great deal too much in poetry of the moping owl, the melancholy owl, the boding owl, whereas he neither mopes nor bodes, and is no more melancholy than becomes a gentleman. We also hear of the owl being addicted to spirituous liquors; and hence the expression, as drunk as an owl. All this is a mere Whig personality, the owl being a Tory of the old school, and a friend of the ancient establishments of church and state. Nay, the same political party, although certainly the most short-sighted of God’s creatures, taunt the owl with being blind. As blind as an owl, is a libel in frequent

use out of ornithological society. Shut up Mr. Jeffrey himself in a hay-barn, with a well-built mow, and ask him in the darkness to catch you a few mice, and he will tell you whether or not the owl be blind. This would be just as fair as to expect the owl to see, like Mr. Jeffrey, through a case in the parliament house during daylight. Nay, we once heard of a writer in Taylor and Hessey call the owl stupid, he himself having longer ears than any species of owl extant. What is the positive character of the owl, may perhaps appear by and by; but we have seen that, describing his character by negations, we may say that he resembles Napoleon Buonaparte much more than Joseph Hume or Alderman Wood. He is not moping—not boding—not melancholy—not a drunkard—not blind—not stupid; as much as it would be prudent to say of any man, whether editor or contributor, in his majesty's dominions.

The eagles, kites, and hawks, hunt by day. The owl is the Nimrod of the night. Then, like one who shall be nameless, he sails about seeking those whom he may devour. To do him justice, he has a truly ghostlike head and shoulders of his own. What horror to the small birds that rejoice in spring's leafy bowers, fast locked we were going to say in each other's arms, but sitting side by side in the same cozey nuptial nest, to be startled out of their love-dreams by the great lamp-eyed beaked face of a horrible monster with horns, picked out of a feathered bed, and wasted off in one bunch, within talons, to pacify a set of hissing, and snappish, and shapeless powder-puffs, in the loophole of a barn? In a house where a cat is kept, mice is much more to be pitied. They are so infatuated with the smell of a respectable larder, that to leave the premises, they confess, is impossible. Yet every hour—nay, every minute of their lives, must they be in the fear of being leaped out upon by four velvet paws, and devoured with kisses from a whiskered mouth, and a throat full of that incomprehensible music—a purr. Life, on such terms, seems to us any thing but desirable. But the truth is, that mice in the fields are not a whit better off. Owls are cats with wings. Skimming along the grass tops,

they stop in a momentary hover, let drop a talon, and away with Mus, his wife and small family of blind children. It is the white, or yellow, or barn, or church, or screech-owl, or gilley-howlet, that behaves in this way; and he makes no bones of a mouse, uniformly swallowing him alive. Our friend, we suspect, though no drunkard, is somewhat of a glutton. In one thing we agree with him, that there is no sort of harm in a heavy supper. There, however, we are guilty of some confusion of ideas. For what to us, who rise in the morning, seems a supper, is to him who gets up at evening twilight, a breakfast. We therefore agree with him in thinking that there is no sort of harm in a heavy breakfast. After having passed a pleasant night in eating, and flirting, he goes to bed betimes, about four o'clock in the morning; and, as Bewick observes, makes a blowing hissing noise resembling the snoring of a man. Indeed nothing can be more diverting to a person annoyed by blue devils, than to look at a white owl, and his wife asleep. With their heads gently inclined towards each other, there they keep snoring away like any Christian couple. Should the one make a pause, the other that instant awakes, and fearing something may be wrong with his spouse, opens a pair of glimmering winking eyes, and inspects the adjacent physiognomy with the scrutinizing stare of a village apothecary. If all be right, the concert is resumed, the snore sometimes degenerating into a sort of snivel, and the snivel becoming a blowing hiss. First time we heard this noise, was in a churchyard, when we were mere boys, having ventured in after dark to catch the minister's colt for a gallop over to the parish-capital, where there was a dancing-school ball. There had been a nest of owls in some hole in the spire; but we never doubted for a moment that the noise of snoring, blowing, hissing and snapping proceeded from a testy old gentleman that had been buried that forenoon, and had come alive again a day after the fair. Had we reasoned the matter a little, we must soon have convinced ourselves that there was no ground for alarm to us at least; for the noise was like that of some one half stifled, and little likely to heave up from above him a six-feet-deep load of earth—to say

nothing of the improbability of his being able to unscrew the coffin from the inside. Be that as it may, we cleared about a dozen of decent tombstones at three jumps—the fourth took us over a wall five feet high within and about fifteen without, and landed us, with a squash, in a cabbage-garden, inclosed on the other three sides by a house and hollyhedge. The house was the sexton's, who apprehending the stramash to proceed from a resurrectionary surgeon mistaken in his latitude, thrust out a long duck-gun from a window in the thatch, and swore to blow out our brains if we did not instantly surrender ourselves, and deliver up the corpse. It was in vain to cry out our name, which he knew as well as his own. He was deaf to reason, and would not withdraw his patterero till we had laid down the corpse. He swore that he saw the sack in the moonlight. This was a horse-cloth, with which we had intended to saddle the "cowte," and that had remained, during the supernatural agency under which we laboured, clutched unconsciously and convulsed in our grasp. Long was it ere Davie Donald would see us in our true light—but at length he drew on his Kilniarnock nightcap, and, coming out with a bouet, let us through the trance, and out of the front door, thoroughly convinced, till we read Bewick, that old Southfield was not dead, although in a very bad way indeed. Let this be a lesson to schoolboys not to neglect the science of natural history, and to study the character of the white owl.

OWLS—both white, and common brown, are not only useful in a mountainous country, but highly ornamental. How serenely beautiful their noiseless flight! A flake of snow is not winnowed through the air more softly-silent! Gliding along the dark shadows of a wood, how spiritual the motion—how like the thought of a dream! And then, during the hushed midnight hours, how jocund the whoop and hollo from the heart of sycamore—gray rock, or ivied tower! How the owls of Windermere must laugh at the silly Lakers, that under the garish eye of day, enveloped in clouds of dust, whirl along in rattling postshays, in pursnit of the picturesque! Why, the least imaginative owl that ever hunted mice by moon-

light on the banks of Windermere, must know the character of its scenery better than any Cockney that ever dined on char at Bowness or Lowood. The long quivering lines of light illuminating some sylvan isle—the evening-star shining from the water to its counterpart in the sky—the glorious phenomenon of the double moon—the night-colours of the woods—and, once in the three years, perhaps, that liveliest and most lustrous of celestial forms, the lunar rainbow—all these and many more beautiful and magnificent sights are familiar to the owls of Windermere. And who know half so well as they do the echoes of Furness, and Applethwaite, and Loughrigg, and Langdale, all the way on to Dungeon-Gill, and Pavey-Ark, Scawfell, and the Great Gable, and that sea of mountains, of which every wave has a name? Midnight—when asleep so still and silent—seems inspired with the joyous spirit of the owls in their revelry—and answers to their mirth and merriment through all her clouds. The moping-owl, indeed—the boding-owl, forsooth—the melancholy-owl, you blockhead—why, they are the most cheerful—joy-portending—and exulting of God's creatures. Their flow of animal spirits is incessant—crowing-cocks are a joke to them—blue-devils are to them unknown—not one hypochondriac in a thousand barns—and the man-in-the-moon acknowledges that he never heard one of them utter a complaint.

But what say ye to an owl, not only like an eagle in plumage—but equal to the largest eagle in size—and, therefore, named from the king of birds, the EAGLE OWL. Mr. Selby! you have done justice to the monarch of the Bubos. We hold ourselves to be persons of tolerable courage, as the world goes—but we could not answer for ourselves showing fight with such a customer, were he to waylay us by night in a wood. In comparison, Jack Thurtell was a ninny. No—that bold, bright-eyed murderer, with horns on his head, like those on Michael Angelo's statue of Moses, would never have had the cruel cowardice to cut the weazand, and smash out the brains of such a miserable wretch as Weare! True he is fond of blood—and where's the harm in that! It is his nature. But if there be any truth in the science of

Physiognomy—and be that of Phrenology what it will—most assuredly there is truth in it, the original of that owl, for whose portrait the world is indebted to Mr. Selby, and Sir Thomas Laurence never painted a finer one of prince or potentate of any holy or unholy alliance, must have despised Probert from the very bottom of his heart. No prudent eagle but would be exceedingly desirous of keeping on good terms with him—devilish shy, i'faith, of giving him any offence—by the least hauteur of manner, or the slightest violation of etiquette. An owl of this character and calibre, is not afraid to show his horns at midday on the mountain. The fox is not over and above fond of him—and his claws can kill a cub at a blow. The doe sees the monster sitting on the back of her fawn, and, maternal instinct overcome by horror, bounds into the brake, and leaves the pretty creature to its fate. Thank heaven he is, in Great Britain, a rare bird. Tempest-driven across the Northern Ocean from his native forests in Russia, an occasional visitant, he “frightens this isle from its propriety,” and causes a hideous screaming through every wood he haunts. Some years ago, one was killed on the upland moors in the county of Durham—and, of course, paid a visit to Mr. Bullock's museum. Eagle-like in all its habits—it builds its nest on high rocks—sometimes on the loftiest trees—and seldom lays more than two eggs, One is one more than enough—and we who fly by night, trust never to fall in with a live specimen of the *strix-bubo* of Linæus.

But lo! largest and loveliest of all the silent night-gliders—the SNOWY-OWL! Gentle reader—if you long to see his picture—we have told you where it may be found;—and in the College Museum, within a glass vase on the central table in the Palace of Stuffed Birds, you may admire his outward very self—the semblance of the owl he was when he used to eye the moon shining o'er the northern sea:—but if you would see the noble and beautiful creature himself, in all his living glory, you must seek him through the long summer-twilight among the Orkney or the Shetland Isles. The snowy-owl dearly loves the snow—and there is, we believe, a tradition

among them, that their first ancestor and ancestress rose up together from a melting snow-wreath on the very last day of a Greenland winter, when all at once the bright fields reappear. The race still inhabits that frozen coast—being common, indeed, through all the regions of the Arctic Circle. It is numerous on the shores of Hudson's Bay, in Norway, Sweden, and Lapland—but in the temperate parts of Europe and America, "*rara avis in terris, nigroque simillima cygno.*"

We defy all the tailors on the face of the habitable globe—and what countless cross-legged fractional parts of men, who, like the beings of whom they are constituents, are thought to double their numbers every thirty years, must not the four quarters of the earth, in their present advanced state of civilization, contain! We defy, we say, all the tailors on the face of the habitable globe to construct such a surtout as that of the snowy-owl! covering him, with equal luxury and comfort, in summer's heat and winter's cold! The elements, in all their freezing fury, cannot reach the body of the bird, through that beautiful down-mail! Well guarded are the openings of those great eyes! Neither the driving dust nor the searching sleet, nor the sharp frozen-snow-stoure, give him the ophthalmia. *Gutta serena* is to him unknown—no snowy-owl was ever couched for cataract—no need has he for an oculist, should he live an hundred years; and were they to attempt any operation on his lens or iris, how he would hoot at Alexander and Wardrobe!

Night, doubtless, is the usual season of his prey; but he does not shun the day, and is sometimes seen hovering unhurt in the sunshine. The red or black grouse flies as if pursued by a ghost; but the snowy-owl, little slower than the eagle, in dreadful silence overtakes his flight, and then death is sudden as it is sure. Hawking is, or was, a noble pastime; and we have now prevented our eyes from glancing at jer-falcon, peregrine, or goshawk, as we are keeping them for a separate article—a leading one of course. But, owling, we do not doubt, would be nowadays inferior sport; and were it to become prevalent in modern times, as hawking was in times of

old, why, each lady, as a Venus already fair, with an owl on her wrist, would look as wise as Minerva.

But, oh! my soul sickens at all those dreams of blood! and fain would she turn herself away from fierce eye, cruel beak, and tearing talon,—war-weapons of them that delight in wounds and death,—to the contemplation of creatures whose characteristics are the love of solitude,—shy gentleness of manner,—the tender devotion of mutual attachment,—and, in field or forest, a life-long passion for peace!

Lo! and behold the RING-DOVE, the QUEST,—or CUSHAT, for that is the very bird we have had in our imagination! There is his full-length portrait, stealthily sketched as the Solitary was sitting on a tree. You must catch him napping, indeed, before he will allow you an opportunity of colouring him on the spot from nature. It is not that he is more jealous or suspicious of man's approach than other bird; for never shall we suffer ourselves to believe that any tribe of the descendants of the dove, that brought to the ark the olive-tidings of reappearing earth, can in their hearts hate or fear the race of the children of man. But nature has made the cushat a lover of the still forest-gloom; and, therefore, when his lonesome haunts are disturbed or intruded on, he flies to some yet profounder, some more central solitude, and folds his wing in the hermitage of a yew, sown in the time of the ancient Britons.

It is the stock-dove, we believe, not the ring-dove, from which are descended all the varieties of the races of doves. What tenderer praise can we give them all, than that the dove is the emblem of innocence, and that the name of innocence—not of frailty—is woman! When Hamlet said the reverse, he was thinking of the queen—not of Ophelia. Is not woman by nature chaste as the dove? As the dove faithful? Sitting all alone with her babe in her bosom, is she not as a dove devoted to her own nest? Murmureth she not a pleasant welcome to her wearied home-returned husband, even like the dove among the woodlands when her mate alights in the pine? Should her spouse be taken from her and disappear, doth not her heart sometimes break, as they say it happens to

the dove! But, oftener far, findeth not the widow that her orphans are still fed by her own hand, that is filled with good things by Providence, till grown up and able to shift for themselves, away they go—just as the poor dove lamenteth for her mate in the snare of the fowler, yet feedeth her young continually through the whole day, till away too go they—alas, in neither case, perhaps, ever more to return!

We dislike all favouritism, and a foolish and capricious partiality for particular bird or beast; but dear, old, sacred associations will *tell* upon all one thinks or feels towards any place or person in this world of ours, near or remote. God forbid we should criticise the cushat. If ever we mention his name in Blackwood's Magazine, we shall, as usual, avoid all personalities, and speak of him as tenderly as of a friend buried in our early youth. Too true it is, that often and oft, when schoolboys, have we striven to steal upon him in his solitude, and to shoot him to death. In morals, and in religion, it would be heterodox to deny that the will is as the deed. Yet in cases of high and low-way robbery and murder, there does seem, treating the subject not in philosophical but popular style, to be some little difference between the two; at least we hope so, for otherwise we can with difficulty imagine one person not deserving to be ordered for execution, on Wednesday next, between the hours of eight and nine ante-meridian. Happily, however, for our future peace of mind, and not improbably for the whole conformation of our character, our guardian genius—(every boy has a guardian genius constantly at his side both during school and play hours, though it must be confessed, sometimes a little remiss in his duty, for the nature even of angelical beings is imperfect)—always so contrived it, that, with all our cunning, we never could kill a cushat. Many a long hour—indeed, whole Saturdays—have we lain perdue among broom and whins, the beautiful green and yellow skirting of sweet Scotia's woods, watching his egress or ingress, our gun ready cocked, and finger on trigger, that, on the flapping of his wings, not a moment might be lost in bringing him to the ground. But couch where we might, no cushat ever

came near our insidious lair. Now and then a magpie,—birds who, by the by, when they suspect you of any intention of shooting them, are as distant in their manners as cushats themselves, otherwise as impudent as Cockneys—would come hopping in continual tail-jerks, with his really beautiful plumage, if one could bring one's-self to think it so, and then sport the pensive within twenty yards of the muzzle of Brown-Bess impatient to let fly. But our soul burned, our heart panted for a cushat; and in that strong fever-fit of passion, could we seek to slake our thirst for that wild blood with the murder of a thievish eavesdropper of a pye? The blackbird, too, often dropt out of the thicket into an open glade in the hazel shaws; and the distinctness of his yellow bill showed he was far within shot-range. Yet, let us do ourselves justice, we never, in our born days, dreamt of shooting a blackbird,—him that scares away sadness from the woodland twilight gloom, at morn or eve; whose anthem, even in those dim days when Nature herself it might be well thought were melancholy, forceth the firmament to ring with joy. Once “the snow-white cony sought its evening meal,” unconscious of our dangerous vicinity, issuing with erected ears from the wood-edge. That last was, we confess, such a temptation to touch the trigger, that had we resisted it we must have been either more or less than boy. We fired; and kicking up his heels, doubtless in fear and fright, but as it then seemed to us, during our disappointment, much rather in fun and frolic—nay absolutely derision—away bounced Master Rabbit to his burrow, without one particle of soft silvery wool on sward or bush, to bear witness to our unerring aim. As if the branch on which he had been sitting were broken, away then went the crashing cushat through the intermingling sprays. The free flapping of his wings was soon heard in the air above the tree-tops, and ere we could recover from our almost bitter amazement, the creature was murmuring to his mate on her shallow nest,—a far-off murmur, solitary and profound, to reach unto which, through the tangled mazes of the forest, would have required a separate sense, instinct, or faculty, which we did not possess. So skulking out of our hiding-place,

we made no comment on the remark of a homeward-plodding labourer, who had heard the report, and now smelt the powder, "cushats are gayan' kittle birds to kill," but returned with our shooting-bag as empty as our stomach, to the Manse.

But often—often did we visit, without thought of cushat, lintwhite, or goldfinch, the fragrant solitude of those hazel shaws. There stood, embowered in birch trees, within a glade and garden cleared into a beautiful circle from the wood-edge, a cottage, that many came to visit, less for its own exceeding loveliness, than for the sake of the inmates who sat beside its hearth. Dear to the schoolboy is the stated or unexpected holiday, when away he goes with a beating heart to the angling in the burn flowing among its broomy braes with many a fairy waterfall—or in the moorland loch with its one isle of pines and old castle ruin. Such—sometimes in passion, sometimes in pensiveness—was the sole pastime of our youth. But often—even in holiday—did we use to steal away from our gleesome comrades, and sit till evening in that sylvan shieling. How hushed and humble in their simplicity were all the ongoings of that lonesome household! The husband at work in the wood, changing the almost valueless hazel coppice, intertwined with briar-roses, into pretty patches of pasturage, sheltered places for the new-dropped lambs—or felling, ere the sap had mounted into the branches, the ringing forest tree. The sound of his ceaseless axe was heard within—and his wife's face smiled as the clock gave warning of the hour of one or six—for in five minutes he was sure to enter the door. He was a labourer—not a slave. Ten hours was his spring and summer day's darg, in winter eight—for his mind deserved the time his body won for it, and he had likewise a heart and a soul to be fed. Had there been nothing for him to be proud of in his wife but her beauty, he might well have held up his head with her by his side at church or market. But he felt his happiness to be in her gentleness, her industry, her sense, and her faith—that through the week kept his house clean, calm, cheerful, ordered,—and on Sabbath serene with a holy rest.

But how—oh how shall I speak of her—the lovely May—that all day long was wandering about her nest on little acts and errands of love, for which alone she seemed to have been born, so ready ever were her blue eyes to fill either with smiles or with tears! Gazing on her forehead, one might indeed easily have thought of the glistening of the threads of fine-beaten gold—or of the gossamer floating in the dew-drop in the morning sun—or of flower-rays dancing in the light to sudden breezes amid the woodlands dim—or some one star looking out in its brightness when all others were in mist. Yet when that fair child was alive—and a daily sight of her beauty given to my fraternal eyes—never once did such images gather round her head. There it was in the beauty of its own ringlets—the loveliness of those lips—the innocence of those eyes! When she spoke, it was her own voice alone that I heard—for it was unlike any other sound on this earth. Often as in her hearing her exceeding beauty had been praised—nor could delighted admiration, even by the thoughtful, be well repressed—she knew not that she was beautiful—but felt that she was happy, and hoped that she was good. Yet when in the Bible she read of sin and sinners, and of Him who died that they might be saved, rueful were the tears she shed, even as if her conscience had been disturbed, and trembled before her Maker. Early and deep in her soul were sown the seeds of Faith—that immortal flower which shall be perfected in heaven. Fair blossoms and precious fruits it bore in her—watered sometimes—but not too often, by solitary tears!—But these were her Sabbath hours, or her hours of week-day prayers. Her life was cheerful—joyful in its blessedness—and all the grief, all the sorrow, all the shame, all the contrition she ever suffered—what were they all to the agony that, had she lived, might have been crowded into the raving darkness of one single day?

We have all read of children—touched by a light from heaven—meditating with a power seemingly far beyond their infant years, upon a world to come. Thoughts and feelings—of which we can know not the full holy virtue—change them into saints, and make them sigh for

heaven. How sweetly have their little voices been heard in hymns, when they knew that they were lying on their deathbeds! They have told their parents not to weep for them—and having kissed their brothers and sisters with such smiles as pass between those who love one another, when one of them is about to go away on a visit from which in a few weeks he is to return—they have laid down their heads, never to be lifted again till the judgment-day. Oh! scoff not at the wonderful piety you may not understand! Look into the eyes of your own daughter of seven years as she is saying her prayers—and disbelieve not the truth told of creatures young and innocent as she—whom God took unto himself—and ere he stretched out his hand to waft them from earth, showed them a glimpse of heaven!

The skies of ten summers only were seen by her, whom in those days I used to call my sister; but whose image, even as the image of a daughter whom I myself had lost, is now sometimes witnessed kneeling along with our children at their prayers. Such is the more than memory—the clear-returning presence of her deathbed. It never could be said that she sickened before she died. Dying she was—that was visible to all—nor did her parents seek to conceal it either from her or themselves. To lose her—never after one certain day to see or hear her more—that was a sentence that, had it been pronounced of a sudden all in one word, would have killed them both. But what do the souls of us mortal beings know of what is in them, till He who made them reveals it all by a dreadful, but a holy light, held close to them in the hand of sorrow? Week followed week—Sabbath followed Sabbath—and all the while she was dying before their eyes. Those eyes could not cease to weep—no, no,—nature issued, in their affliction, no such decree. But there was at last little or no bitterness in their tears—there was no more sobbing—no more bursting of the heart—as far as beings like us, who see God's judgments dimly, can be resigned—they were resigned—and so said both the father and the mother, when, left alone in the house of death, they closed their Lucy's eyes, and took

off gently—oh more gently than if she had been asleep—a lifeless ringlet from her temples, to put within the leaves of the Bible at the very place she had read her last—that every morning, every mid-day, every evening, and many a midnight too—they might see it, and kiss it, and weep over it—on, on, for ever—till they both were dead!

When their friends were asked to the funeral, I was not forgotten. Neither of them had any blood-relations, and some lived at too great a distance for poor men to come; so I was one of the chief mourners, and stood close to her father, when we let her down into her grave. In the midst of my sore weeping, his pale face seemed to bid me restrain my tears; but when all was over, and we had reached the churchyard gate, it was my turn to be the comforter. Methinks I hear that groan at this very silent moment; but deep as it was, as deep a groan as ever rended a human breast, what matters it now, more than a sigh of the wind through a crevice,—for twenty long years have had their flight, since the heart that uttered it ceased to quake with any mortal passion.

By what inscrutable causes are we led to fasten thus upon some one long-ago event, that had lain year after year in utter oblivion? Why thus will some one single solitary idea, some momentary event of our past life, all of itself flash upon us, and haply never be thought of more? A sweet voice once heard,—a face that past by,—a tune,—a rose-tree that bore a thousand blossoms,—a ship in full sail,—a sunset,—a tear,—a hope,—an agony,—an ecstasy,—the light of an assured virtue,—the shadow of an assured sin! Oh! my little Lucy—my beautiful, my beloved—thou who hast so long been dead—and often, for years at a time, by me utterly forgotten—thou and the morning are before me, looking just as did thy face, and heaven's, when first I beheld thee at thy cottage-door!

Which is the best poem—Grahame's *Birds of Scotland*, or his *Sabbath*?—Both are full of pathos—but the "*Birds*" is the most poetical. "Why do the birds sing on Sunday?" said once a little boy to us,—and we answered him in a lyrical ballad, which we have lost, otherwise we had intended to have sent it—without solicitation

—to Alaric Watts's *Souvenir*, for the pleasure (who is without vanity?) of seeing our name shining, or even obscured, in that splendid galaxy of stars. But although the birds certainly do sing on Sunday,—behaviour that with our small gentle Calvinist who dearly loved them, caused some doubts of their being so innocent as during the week days they appeared to be,—we cannot set down their fault to the score of ignorance. It is in the holy superstition of the world-wearied heart that man believes the inferior creatures to be conscious of the calm of the Sabbath, and that they know it to be the day of our rest? Or is it that we transfer the feeling of our inward calm to all the goings-on of Nature, and thus embue them with a character of reposing sanctity existing only in our own spirits? Both solutions are true. The instincts of those creatures we know only in their symptoms and their effects—and the wonderful range of action over which they reign. Of the instincts themselves—as feelings or ideas—we know not any thing—nor ever can know; for an impassable gulf separates the nature of those that are to perish from ours that are to live for ever. But their power of memory, we must believe, is not only capable of minutest retention, but also stretches back to afar—and some power or other they do possess that gathers up the past experience into rules of conduct that guide them in their solitary or gregarious life. Why, therefore, should not the birds of Scotland know the Sabbath-day? On that day the water-ouzel is never disturbed by angler among the murmurs of his own waterfall—and as he flits down the banks and braes of the burn, he sees no motion—he hears no sound about the cottage that is the boundary of his farthest flight—for “the dizzying mill-wheel rests.” The merry-nodding rooks, that in spring-time keep following the very heels of the ploughman—may they not know it to be Sabbath, when all the horses are standing idle in the field, or taking a gallop by themselves round the head-rigg? Quick of hearing are birds—one and all—and in every action of their lives are obedient to sounds. May they not, then, do they not connect a feeling of perfect safety with the tinkle of the small kirk-bell? The very jay himself is not shy of peo-

ple on their way to worship. The magpie, that never sits more than a minute at a time in the same place on a Saturday, will on the Sabbath remain on the kirkyard wall with all the composure of a dove. The whole feathered creation know our hours of sleep. They awake before us, and ere the earliest labourer has said his prayers, have not the woods and valleys been ringing with their hymns? Why, therefore, may not they, who know, each week-day, the hour of our lying down, and our rising up, know also the day of our general rest? The animals, whose lot is labour, shall they not know it? Yes; the horse on that day sleeps in shade or sunshine without fear of being disturbed; his neck forgets the galling collar, "and there are forty feeding like one," all well knowing that their fresh meal on the tender herbage will not be broken in upon before the dews of next morning, ushering in a new day to them of toil or travel.

So much for our belief in the knowledge, instinctive or from a sort of reason, possessed by the creatures of the inferior creation of the heaven-appointed Sabbath to man and beast. But it is also true, that we transfer our inward feeling to their outward condition, and with our religious spirit embue all the ongoings of animated and even inanimated life. There is always a shade of melancholy, a tinge of pensiveness, a touch of pathos, in all profound rest. Perhaps because it is so much in contrast with the turmoil of our ordinary being. Perhaps because the soul, when undisturbed, will, from the impulse of its own divine nature, have high, solemn, and awful thoughts. In such state, it transmutes all things into a show of sympathy with itself. The church-spire, that rising high above the smoke and stir of a town, when struck by the sun-fire, seems, on a market-day, a tall building in the air that may serve as a guide to people at a distance flocking into the bazaars—the same church-spire, were its loud-tongued bell to call from aloft on the gathering multitude below, to celebrate the anniversary of some great victory, Waterloo, or Trafalgar, would appear to stretch up its stature triumphantly into the sky—so much the more triumphantly—if the standard of England were floating from its upper battlements. But to the devout

eye of faith, doth it not seem to express its own character, when on the Sabbath it performs no other office than to point to heaven!

So much for the second solution. But independently of both, no wonder that all nature seems to rest on the Sabbath. For it doth rest—all of it, at least, that appertains to man and his condition. If the second commandment be kept—at rest is all the household—and all the fields round it are at rest. Calm flows the current of human life, on that gracious day, throughout all the glens and valleys of Scotland, as a stream that wimples in the morning sunshine, freshened but not flooded with the soft-falling rain of a summer-night. The spiral smoke-wreath above the cottage is not calmer than the motion within. True, that the wood warblers do not cease their songs; but the louder they sing, the deeper is the stillness. And, oh! what perfect blessedness, when it is only joy that is astir in rest!

Loud-flapping cushat! it was thou that inspired'st these paragraphs; and instead of being paid at the rate of fifty guineas a sheet, we have only to wish thee, for thy part contributed to this article, now that the acorns of autumn must be well nigh consumed, many a plentiful repast, amid the multitude of thy now congregated comrades, in the cleared stubble lands,—as severe weather advances, and the ground becomes covered with snow, regales undisturbed by fowler, on the tops of turnip, rape, and other cruciform plants, which all of thy race affect so passionately,—and soft blow the sea-breezes on thy unruffled plumage, when thou takest thy winter's walk with kindred myriads on the shelly shore, and for a season minglest with gull and seamew,—apart every tribe, one from the other, in the province of its own peculiar instinct—yet all mysteriously taught to feed or sleep together within the roar or margin of the main.

Sole-sitting cushat! I see thee through the yew-tree's shade, on some day of the olden time, but when or where I remember not—for what has place or time to do with the vision of a dream? That I see thee is all I know, and serenely beautiful thou art! Oh, pleasant is it to dream, and to know we dream. By sweet volition we keep our-

selves half asleep and half awake, and all our visions of thought, as they go swimming along, partake at once of reality and imagination. Fiction and truth—clouds, shadows, phantoms, and phantasms—ether, sunshine, substantial forms and sounds that have a being, blending together in a scene created by us, and partly impressed upon us, and that one motion of the head on the pillow may dissolve, or deepen into more oppressive delight! In some such dreaming state of mind are we now; and, gentle reader, if thou art broad awake, lay aside the visionary volume, or read a little longer, and likely enough is it, that thou mayst fall half asleep. If so, let thy drowsy eyes still pursue the glimmering paragraphs—and wafted away wilt thou feel thyself to be, with Maga in thy hand, into the heart of a Highland forest, that knows no bounds but those of the uncertain sky!

Away from my remembrance fades the noisy world of men into a silent glimmer—and now it is all no more than a mere faint thought. On—on—on through briary brake—matted thicket—glassy glade—on—on—on farther into the forest. What a confusion of huge stones, rocks, knolls, all tumbled together into a chaos—not without its stern and sterile beauty! Still are there, above, blue glimpses of the sky—deep though the umbrage be, and wide-flung the arms of the oaks, and of pines in their native wilderness, gigantic as oaks, and extending as broad a shadow. Now the firmament has vanished—and all is twilight. Immense stems “in number without number numberless,” bewildering eye and soul—all still—silent—steadfast—and so would they be in a storm. For what storm—let it rage aloft as it might—till the surface of the forest toss and roar like the sea—could force its path through these many million trunks? The thunder-stone might split that giant there—how vast! how magnificent! but the brother by his side would not tremble—and the sound—in the awful width of the silence—what more would it be than that of the woodpecker, alarming the insects of one particular tree!

Poor wretch that I am!—to me the unaccompanied silence of the solitude hath become terrible. More dreadful is it than the silence of the tomb; for there, often

arise responses to the unuttered soliloquies of the pensive heart! This is the silence not of Time, but Eternity!—No burial heaps—no mounds—no cairns!—It is not as if man had perished here, and been forgotten, but as if this were a world in which there had been neither living nor dying. Too utter is the solitariness even for the ghosts of the dead! for they are thought to haunt the burial-places of what once was their bodies—the chamber where the spirit breathed its final farewell—the spot of its transitory love and delight, or of its sin and sorrow—to gaze with troubled tenderness on the eyes that once they worshipped—with cold ear to drink the music of the voices long ago adored; and in all their permitted visitations, to express, if but by the beckoning shadow of a hand, some unextinguishable longing after the converse of the upper world, even within the gates of hell and the grave!

A change comes o'er the spirit of my dream!—Deep and still as is the solitude, I am relieved of my awe, and out of the forest gloom arise images of beauty that come and go, gliding as on wings, or, statue-like, stand in the glades, like the sylvan deities to whom of old belonged by birthright all the regions of the woods. On—on—on—farther into the forest, and let the awe of imagination be still farther tempered by the delight breathed even from any one of the lovely names sweet-sounding through the famous fables of antiquity. Dryad, Hamadryad! Faunus! Sylvanus!—Now, alas! ye are but names, and no more! Great Pan himself is dead, or here he would set up his reign. But what right has such a dreamer to dream of the dethroned deities of Greece! The language they spoke is not his language: yet the words of the great poets that sung of gods and demigods are beautiful in their silent meanings, as they meet his adoring eyes; and, mighty lyrists! has he not often floated down the temple-crowned and altar-shaded rivers of your great choral odes?

On—on—on—farther into the forest!—unless indeed, O my soul! thou darest that the limbs that bear on thy fleshly tabernacle may fail, and the body left to itself sink down and die. Ha! such fears thou laughest to scorn; for from youth upwards thou hast dallied with the wild

and perilous; and what but the chill delight in which thou hast so often shivered in threatening solitude brought thee here? These dens are not dungeons, nor am I a thrall. Yet if dungeons they must be called,—and they are deep, and dark, and grim,—ten thousand gates hath this great prison-house, and wide open are they all. So on—on—on—farther into the forest, even if to emerge from it into open daylight should take the whole of this nightlike day.

Lo! the reappearing sky!—and gloriously glittering with sunlight, a wooded mountain within the forest! But who shall ascend to its summit? Eagles and dreams. Round its base we go, rejoicing in the newfound day, and once more cheered and charmed with the music of birds. Say whence came, ye scientific world-makers, those vast blocks of granite? Was it fire or water, think ye, that hung in air the semblance of that Gothic cathedral, without nave, or chancel, or aisle,—a mass of solid rock. Yet it looks like the abode of echoes; and haply when there is thunder, rolls out its lengthening shadow of sound to the ear of the solitary shepherd afar off on Cairn-gorm.

On—on—on—farther into the forest! Now on all sides leagues of ancient trees surround me, and I am safe as in the grave from the persecuting love or hatred of friends or foes. The sun shall not find me by day, nor the moon by night. Were my life forfeited to what are called the laws, for murder by the knife or poison, how could the laws discover the criminal? How could they drag me from the impenetrable gloom of this sylvan sanctuary? And if here I choose to perish by suicide or natural death,—what eye would ever look on my bones? Raving all; but so it ever is with my soul in severest solitude,—her dreams must still be hideous with sin and death!

Hideous all, did I say, with sin and death? Thoughts that came flying against me like vultures, like vultures have disappeared, disappointed of their prey, and afraid to fix their talons in a thing alive. Thither—by some secret and sacred impulse within the soul, that often knoweth not

the sovereign virtue of its own great desires,—have I been led as into a penitentiary, where, before the altar of nature, I may lay down the burthen of guilt and remorse, and walk out of the forest a heaven-pardoned man. What guilt?—O my soul! canst thou think of Him who inhabiteth eternity, and ask what guilt? What remorse? For the dereliction of duty every day since thou received'st from heaven the understanding of good and of evil. All my past existence gathers up into one dread conviction, that every man that is born of a woman is a sinner, and worthy of everlasting death. Yet with the same dread conviction is interfused a knowledge, clear as the consciousness of present being, that the soul will live for ever. What was the meaning, O my soul! of all those transitory joys and griefs,—of all those fears, hopes, loves, that so shook, each in its own fleeting season, the very foundation on which thy being in this life is laid? Anger, wrath, hatred, pride, and ambition, what are they all but so many shapes of sin coeval with thy birth? That sudden entrance of heaven's light into the forest was like the opening of the eye of God! and my spirit stands ashamed of its nakedness, because of the foulness and pollution of sin. But the awful thoughts that have travelled through its chambers have ventilated, swept, and cleansed them, and let me break from beneath the weight of confession.

Ha! what has brought thee hither, thou wide-antlered king of the red-deer of Braemar, from the spacious desert of thy hills of storm? Ere now I have beheld thee, or one stately as thee, gazing abroad, from a rock over the heather, to all the points of heaven; and soon as my figure was seen far below, leading the van of the flight, thou went'st thundering away into the wilderness. But now thou glidest softly and slowly through the gloom—no watchfulness, no anxiety in thy large beaming eyes; and kneeling among the hoary mosses, layest thyself down in unknown fellowship with one of those human creatures, a glance of whose eye, a murmur of whose voice, would send thee bellowing through the forest, terrified by the flash or sound that bespoke a hostile nature wont to pursue thy race unto death. The hunter is upon thee—away—

away! Sudden as a shooting star up springs the red-deer, and in the gloom as suddenly is lost.

On—on—on farther into the forest, and hark a noise as of "thunder heard remote!" Waterfalls—hundreds of waterfalls sounding for ever—here—there—every where—among the remote woods. Northwards one fierce torrent dashes through the centre of the forest—but no villages—only a few woodmen's shielings are on its banks: for it is a torrent of precipices, where the shrubs that hang midway from the cleft, are out of the reach of the spray of its cataracts, even when the red Garroch is in flood.

Many hours have I been in the wilderness, and my heart yearns again for the cheerful dwellings of men. Sweet infant streamlet, that flows by my feet without a murmur, so shallow are yet thy waters—wilt thou—short as hitherto has been thy journeying—wilt thou be my guide out into the green valleys and the blue heaven, and the sight once more of the bright sunshine and the fair fleecy clouds? No other clue to the labyrinth do I seek but that small, thin, pure, transparent thread of silver, which neither bush nor brier will break, and which will wind without entanglement round the roots of the old trees, and the bases of the shaggy rocks. As if glad to escape from its savage birthplace, the small rivulet now gives utterance to a song; and sliding now down shelving rocks, so low in their mossy verdure as hardly to deserve that name—it glides along the almost level lawns, here and there disclosing a little hermit flower. No danger now of its being imbibed wholly by the thirsty earth—for it has a channel and banks of its own—and there is a waterfall! Thenceforwards the rivulet never loses its merry voice—and in an hour it is a torrent. What beautiful symptoms now of its approach to the edge of the forest! wandering lights and whispering airs are here visitants—and lo! the blue eye of a wild violet looking up from the ground! The glades are more frequent, more frequent open spaces cleared by the woodman's axe—and the antique oak-tree all alone by itself, itself a grove. The torrent may be called noble now—

and that deep-blue atmosphere—or say rather, that glimmer of purple air, lies over the strath in which a great river rolls along to the sea.

Nothing in all nature is more beautiful than the boundary of a great Highland forest. Masses of rocks thrown together in magnificent confusion, many of them lichened and weather-stained with colours gorgeous as the eyed plumage of the peacock, the lustre of the rainbow, or the barred and clouded glories of setting suns—some towering aloft with trees sown in the crevices by bird or breeze, and chequering the blue sky—others bare, black, abrupt, grim as volcanoes, and shattered as if by the lightning stroke. Yet interspersed, places of perfect peace—circles among that tall heather, or taller lady-fern smoothed into velvet, it is there easy to believe, by fairies' feet,—rocks where the undisturbed linnet hangs her nest among the blooming briars, all floating with dew-draperies of honeysuckle alive with bees,—glades green as emerald, where lie the lambs in tempered sunshine, or haply a lovely doe reposes with her fawn—and farther down, where the fields half belong to the mountain and half to the strath, the smoke of hidden huts—a log-bridge flung across the torrent—a hanging garden, and a little broomy knoll, with a few laughing children at play, almost as wild-looking as the wanderers of the woods!

Turn your eyes, if you can, from that lovely wilderness, and behold down along a mile-broad valley, fed by a thousand torrents, floweth the noblest of Scotia's rivers, the strong-sweeping Spey! Let imagination launch her canoe, and be thou a solitary steersman, for need is none of oar or sail; keep the middle course, while all the groves go by,—and ere the sun has sunk behind yon golden mountains—nay, mountains they are not, but a transitory pomp of clouds, thou mayest list the roaring, and behold the foaming of the sea.

Was there ever such a descriptive dream of a coloured engraving of the Cushat, Quest, or Ring-Dove, dreamt before? Poor worn-out and glimmering candle! whose wick of light and life in a few more flickerings will be no more—what a contrast dost thou present with thyself of

eight hours ago! Then, truly, wert thou a shining light, and high aloft in the room gloaming burned thy clear crest like a star! During its midnight silence, a *memento mori*, of which my spirit is not afraid! Now thou art dying—dying—dead. My cell is in darkness. But methinks I see another—a purer—a clearer light,—one more directly from heaven. I touch but a spring in a wooden shutter, and lo! the full blaze of day. Oh! why should we mortal beings dread that night-prison—the grave!

MAY-DAY.

(Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, 1827.)

ART thou beautiful, as of old, O wild, moorland, sylvan and pastoral parish—the paradise in which my spirit dwelt beneath the glorious dawning of life? Can it be, beloved world of boyhood, that thou art indeed beautiful, as of old? Though round and round thy boundaries in a few minutes could fly the flapping dove,—though the martens, wheeling to and fro that ivied and wall-flowered ruin of a castle, central in its own domain, seem in their more distant flight, to glance their crescent wings over a vale rejoicing apart in a kirk-spire of its own; yet how full of streams, and rivulets, and rills, art thou—each with its own peculiar murmur! How endless the interchange of woods and meadows, glens, dells, and broomy nooks, without number, among banks and braes!—And then of human dwellings—how rises the smoke, ever and anon, into the sky, all neighbouring on each other, so that the cockerow is heard from homestead to homestead, —while as you wander onwards, each roof still rises unexpectedly—and as solitary, as if it had been far remote! Fairest of Scotland's thousand parishes—neither highland, nor lowland—but undulating, like the sea in sunset, after a day of storms,—yes, heaven's blessing be upon thee! Thou art indeed beautiful, as of old!

The same heavens! More blue than any colour that tinges the flowers of earth—even than the violet placed among the veins of a virgin's bosom. The stillness of those lofty clouds makes them seem whiter than the snow! Return, O lark! to thy grassy nest, in the furrow of the green-bairded corn, for thy brooding mate can no

longer hear thee soaring in the sky.—Methinks, there is little or no change on these coppice-woods, with their full budding branches all impatient for the spring. Yet twice have the axe and billhook levelled them with the mossy stones, since among the broomy and briery knolls I sought the gray linnet's nest, or wandered to spy, among the rustling leaves, the robin-redbreast seemingly forgetful of his winter benefactor, man!—Surely there were trees here in former times, that now are gone—tall, far-spreading single trees, in whose shade used to lie the ruminating cattle, with the small herd-girl asleep! Gone are they, and dimly remembered, as the uncertain shadows of dreams; yet not more forgotten than some living beings with whom my infancy and boyhood held converse—whose voices, laughter, eyes, forehead—hands so often grasped—arms linked in mine, as we danced along the braes—have long ceased to be more than images and echoes, incapable of commanding so much as one single tear. For oh! the treachery of memory to all the holiest human affections, when beguiled by the slow but sure sorcery of time!

It is MAY-DAY, and I shall be happy as the season. What although some sad and solemn thoughts come suddenly across me, the day is not at nightfall felt to have been the less delightful, because that shadows now and then bedimmed it, and moments almost mournful, of an unhymning hush, took possession of field or forest. I am all alone,—a solitary pedestrian,—and obeying the fine impulses of a will whose motives are changeable as the chameleon's hues, my feet shall bear me glancingly along to the merry music of streams,—or linger by the silent shores of lochs,—or upon the hill-summit pause, I the only spectator of a panorama painted by spring for my sole delight,—or plunge into the old wood's magnificent exclusion from sky,—where, all summer long, day is as night,—but not so now, for this is the season of buds and blossoms—and the cushat's nest is yet visible on the almost leafless boughs, and the sunshine streams in upon the ground-flowers, that in another month will be cold and pale in the forest gloom, almost as those that bedeck the dead when the vault-door is closed and all is silence.

What ! shall I linger here within a little mile of the MANSE, wherein and among it spleasant bounds my infant and boyish life glided, murmuring away like a stream, that never, till it leaves its native hills, knows taint or pollution—and not hasten on to the dell, in which, nest-like, it is built and guarded by some wonderful felicity of situation, equally against all the winds ? No—thither as yet have I not courage to direct my footsteps—for that venerable man has long been dead—not one of his ancient household now remains on earth. There the change, though it was gradual and unpainful, according to the gentlest laws of nature, has been entire and complete. The old familiar faces I can dream of, but never more shall see—and the voices that are now heard within these walls, what can they ever be to me, when I would fain listen in the silence of my own spirit to the echoes of departed years ! It is an appalling trial to approach a place where once we have been happier—Oh ! happier far than ever we can be on this earth again—ay—a worse evil doth it seem to my imagination to return to paradise with a changed and saddened heart, than at first to be driven from it into the outer world, if still permitted to carry thither something of that spirit that had glorified our celestial prime !

But yonder, I see, yet towers the sycamore on the crown of the hill,—the first great tree in the parish that used to get green, for stony as seems the hard glebe, constricted by its bare and gnarled roots, they draw sustenance from afar ; and not another knoll on which the sun so delights to pour his beams, from morn to dewy eve. Weeks before any other sycamore, and as early even as the alder or the birch,—the GLORY OF MOUNT PLEASANT, for so we schoolboys called it, unfolded itself like a banner. You could then see only the low windows of the dwelling,—for eaves, roof, rigging, and chimneys, all disappeared,—and then, when you stood beneath, was not the sound of the bees, like the very sound of the sea itself, continuous, unabating, all day long unto evening, when, as if the tide of life had ebbd, there was a perfect silence ?

MOUNT PLEASANT ! well indeed dost thou deserve the

name, bestowed on thee, perhaps long ago, not by any one of the humble proprietors, but by the general voice of praise, all visitors being won by thy cheerful beauty. For from that shaded platform, what a sweet vision of fields and meadows, knolls, braes, and hills, uncertain gleamings of a river, the smoke of many houses, and glittering, perhaps in the sunshine, the spire of the house of God! To have seen Adam Morrison, the elder, sitting with his solemn, his austere Sabbath-face, beneath the pulpit, with his expressive eyes fixed on the preacher, you could not but have judged him to be a man of a stern character and austere demeanour. To have seen him at labour on the working-days, you might almost have thought him the serf of some tyrant lord, for into all the toils of the field he carried the force of a mind that would suffer nothing to be undone that strength or skill could achieve; but within the humble porch of his own house, beside his own board, and his own fireside, he was a man to be kindly esteemed by his guests, by his own family tenderly and reverently beloved. His wife was the comeliest matron in the parish, a woman of active habits and a strong mind, but tempering the natural sternness of her husband's character with that genial and jocund cheerfulness, that of all the lesser virtues is the most efficient to the happiness of a household. One daughter only had they, and I could charm my own heart even now, by evoking the vanished from oblivion, and imaging her over and over again in the light of words; but although all objects, animate and inanimate, seem always tinged with an air of sadness when they are past,—and as at present I am determined to be cheerful—obstinately to resist all access of melancholy—an enemy to the pathetic—and a scorner of shedders of tears—therefore let Mary Morrison rest in her grave, and let me paint a pleasant picture of a May-day afternoon, and enjoy it as it was enjoyed of old, beneath that stately sycamore, with the grandisonant name of THE GLORY OF MOUNT PLEASANT.

There, under that murmuring shadow, round and round that noble stem, there used on MAY-DAY to be fitted a somewhat fantastic board, all deftly arrayed in homespun drapery, white as the patches of unmelted snow on the

distant mountain-head; and on various seats,—stumps, stones, stools, creepies, forms, chairs, armless and with no spine, or high-backed and elbowed, and the carving work thereof most intricate and allegorical—took their places, after much formal ceremony of scraping and bowing, blushing and curtseying, old, young, and middle-aged, of high and low degree, till in one moment all were hushed by the minister shutting his eyes, and holding up his hand to ask a blessing. And “well worthy of a grace as lang’s a tether,” was the MAY-DAY meal spread beneath the shadow of the GLORY OF MOUNT PLEASANT. But the minister uttered only a few fervent sentences—and then we all fell to the curds and cream. What smooth, pure, bright burnished beauty on those horn spoons! How apt to the hand the stalk—to the mouth how apt the bowl! Each guest drew closer to his breast the deep broth-plate of delit, rather more than half full of curds, many million times more deliciously desirable even than blanc-mange, and then filled up to the very brim with a blessed outpouring of creamy richness, that tenaciously descended from an enormous jug, the peculiar expression of whose physiognomy, particularly the nose, I will carry with me to the grave! The dairy at MOUNT PLEASANT consisted of twenty cows—almost all spring calvers, and of the Ayrshire breed—so you may guess what cream! The spoon could not stand in it—it was not so thick as that—for that is too thick—but the spoon when placed upright in any depth of it, retained its perpendicularity for a moment, and then, when uncertain towards which side to fall, was grasped by the hand of delighted and wondering schoolboy, and steered with its first fresh and fragrant freight into a mouth already open in astonishment. Never beneath the sun, moon, and stars, were there such oatmeal cakes, pease-scones, and barley-bannocks, as at MOUNT PLEASANT. You could have eaten away at them with pleasure, even although not hungry—and yet it was impossible of them to eat too much—Manna that they were!! Seldom—seldom indeed—is butter yellow on May-day. But the butter of the gudewife of Mount Pleasant—such, and so rich was the old lea-pasture—was coloured like the crocus, before the young thrushes had

left the nest in the honeysuckled corner of the gavel-end. Not a single hair in a churn! Then what honey and what jam! The first, not heather, for that is too luscious, especially after such cream,—but the pure white virgin honey, like dew shaken from clover,—and oh! over a layer of such butter on such barley bannocks, was such honey, on such a day, on such company, and to such palates, too divine to be described by such a pen as that now wielded by such a writer as I, in such a periodical! The jam! It was of gooseberries—the small black hairy ones—gathered to a very minute from the bush, and boiled to a very moment in the pan! A bannock studded with some dozen or two of such grozets was more beautiful than a corresponding expanse of heaven adorned with as many stars. The question, with the gawsy and generous gudewife of Mount Pleasant, was not—“My dear laddie, which will ye hae—hinny or jam?” but, “Which will ye hae first?” The honey, I well remember, was in two huge brown jugs, or jars, or crocks; the jam, in half a dozen white cans of more moderate dimensions, from whose mouths a veil of thin transparent paper was withdrawn, while, like a steam of rich distilled perfumes, rose a fruity fragrance, that blended with the vernal balminess of the humming sycamore. There the bees were all at work for next May-day, happy as ever bees were on Hybla itself; and gone now though be the age of gold, happy as Arcadians were we, nor wanted our festal-day or pipe or song; for to the breath of Harry Wilton, the young English boy, the flute gave forth tones almost as liquid sweet as those that flowed from the lips of Mary Morrison, who alone, of all singers in hut or hall that ever drew tears, left nothing for the heart or the imagination to desire in any one of Scotland’s ancient melodies.

Never had Mary Morrison heard the old ballad-airs sung, except during the mid-day hour of rest, in the corn or hay-field—and rude singers are they all—whether male or female voices—although sometimes with a touch of natural pathos that finds its way to the heart. But as the nightingale would sing truly its own beautiful song, although it never were to hear any one of its own kind

warbling from among the shrub-roots, so all untaught but by the nature within her, and inspired by her own delightful genius alone, did Mary Morrison feel all the measures of those ancient melodies, and give to them all an expression at once simple and profound. People that said they did not care about music—especially Scottish music, it was so monotonous and insipid—laid aside their indifferent looks before three notes of the simplest air had left Mary Morrison's lips, as she sat faintly blushing, less in bashfulness than in her own soul's emotion, with her little hands playing perhaps with flowers, and her eyes fixed on the ground, or raised, ever and anon, in the dewy light of a beautiful enthusiasm, to the skies. "In all common things," would most people say, "she is but a very ordinary girl—but her musical turn is really very singular indeed;"—but her happy father and mother knew, that in all common things—that is, in all the duties of a humble and innocent life, their Mary was by nature excellent, as in the melodies and harmonies of song—and that while her voice in the evening-psalm was as angel's sweet, so was her spirit almost pure as an angel's, and nearly inexperienced of sin.

Proud, indeed, were her parents on that May-day to look upon her—and to listen to her—as their Mary sat beside the young English boy—admired of all observers—and happier than she had ever been in this world before, in the charm of their blended music, and the unconscious affection—sisterly, yet more than sisterly—for brother she had none—that towards one so kind and noble was yearning at her heart.

Beautiful were they both; and when they sat side by side in their music, insensible must that heart have been by whom they were not both admired and beloved. It was thought that they loved one another too, too well, for Harry Wilton was the grandson of an English peer, and Mary Morrison a peasant's child; but they could not love too well,—she in her tenderness,—he in his passion,—for, with them, life and love was a delightful dream, out of which they were never to be awakened,—for, as if by some secret sympathy, both sickened on the same day,—of the same fever,—and died at the same hour;—and not

from any dim intention of those who buried them, but accidentally, and because the burial-ground of the minister and the elder adjoined, were they buried almost in the same grave, for not half a yard of daisied turf divided them—a curtain between the beds on which brother and sister slept!

In their delirium they both talked about each other—Mary Morrison and Harry Wilton—yet their words were not words of love, only of common kindness; for, although on their death-beds, still they did not talk about death, but frequently about that May-day festival, and other pleasant meetings in neighbours' houses, or in the Manse. Mary sometimes rose up in bed, and in imagination joined her voice to that of the flute, that to his lips was to breathe no more! and even at the very selfsame moment—so it wonderfully was—did he tell all to be hushed, for that Mary Morrison was about to sing the Flowers of the Forest.

Methinks that no deep impressions of the past, although haply they may sleep for ever, and be as if they had ceased to be, are ever utterly obliterated; but that they may, one and all, reappear at some hour or other, however distant, legible as at the very moment they were first engraven on the memory. Not by the power of meditation are the long ago vanished thoughts or emotions restored to us, in which we found delight or disturbance; but of themselves do they seem to arise, not undesired indeed, but unbidden, like sea-birds that come unexpectedly floating up into some inland vale, because, unknown to us who wonder at them, the tide is flowing and the breezes blow from the main. Bright as the living image of my own daughter stands now before me the ghost—for what else is it than the ghost—of Mary Morrison, just as she stood before me on one particular day,—in one particular place, more than twenty years ago! It was at the close of one of those midsummer days which melt away into twilight, rather than into night, although the stars are visible, and bird and beast asleep. All by herself, as she walked along between the braes, was she singing a hymn—

And must this body die?
This mortal frame decay?
And must these feeble limbs of mine
Lie mould'ring in the clay?

Not that the child had any thought of death, for she was as full of life as the star above her was of lustre,—tamed though they both were by the holy hour. At my bidding she renewed the strain that had ceased as we met, and continued to sing it while we parted, her voice dying away in the distance, like an angel's from a broken dream. Never heard I that voice again, for in three little weeks it had gone, to be extinguished no more, to join the heavenly choirs at the feet of the Redeemer.

Did both her parents lose all love to life, when their sole daughter was taken away? and did they die finally of broken hearts? No—such is not the natural working of the human spirit, if kept in repair by pure and pious thought. Never were they so happy indeed as they had once been—nor was their happiness of the same kind—but different, oh! different far in resignation that often wept when it did not repine, and in faith that now held, since their child was there, a tenderer commerce with the skies! Smiles were not very long of being again seen at Mount Pleasant. An orphan cousin of Mary's—they had been as sisters—took her place, and filled it too, as far as the living can ever fill the place of the dead. Common cares continued for awhile to occupy the elder and his wife, for there were not a few to whom their substance was to be a blessing. Ordinary observers could not have discerned any abatement of his activities in field or market; but others saw that the toil to him was now but a duty that had formerly been a delight. When the lease of Mount Pleasant was out, the Morrisons retired to a small house, with a garden, a few hundred yards from the kirk. Let him be strong as a giant, infirmities often come on the hard-working man before you can well call him old. It was so with Adam Morrison. He had broke down fast, I have been told, in his sixtieth year, and after that partook but of one single sacrament. Not in tales of fiction alone do those who have long loved and well, lay themselves down and die in each other's

arms. Such happy deaths are recorded on humble tombstones; and there is one on which this inscription may be read—"HERE LIE THE BODIES OF ADAM MORRISON AND OF HELEN ARMOUR HIS SPOUSE. THEY DIED ON THE 1ST OF MAY 17—. HERE ALSO LIES THE BODY OF THEIR DAUGHTER, MARY MORRISON, WHO DIED, JUNE 2, 17—." The headstone is a granite slab—as they almost all are in that kirk-yard—and the kirk itself is of the same enduring material. But touching that grave is a marble monument, white almost as the very snow, and, in the midst of the emblazonry of death, adorned with the armorial bearings belonging to a family of the high-born.

Sworn brother of my soul! during the bright ardours of boyhood, when the present was all-sufficient in its own bliss, the past soon forgotten, and the future unfear'd, what might have been thy lot, my beloved Harry Wilton, had thy span of life been prolonged to this very day? Better,—oh! far better was it for thee and thine that thou didst so early die, for it seemeth that a curse is on that lofty lineage; and that, with all their genius, accomplishments, and virtues, dishonour comes and goes, a familiar and privileged guest, out and in their house. Shame never veiled the light of those bold eyes, nor tamed the eloquence of those sunny lips, nor ever for a single moment bowed down that young princely head, that, like a fast-growing flower, seemed each successive morning to be visibly rising up towards a stately manhood. But the time was not far distant, when, to thy soul and to all thy senses, life would have undergone a rueful transformation. Thy father, expatriated by the spells of a sorceress, and forced into foreign countries, to associate with vice, worthlessness, profligacy, and crime!—Thy mother, dead of a broken heart! And that lovely sister, who came to the Manse with her jewelled hair—But all these miserable things who could prophesy, at the hour when we and the weeping villagers laid thee, apart from the palace and the burial-vault of thy high-born ancestors, without anthem or organ-peal, among the humble dead? Needless and foolish were all those floods of tears. In thy brief and beautiful course, nothing have we that loved thee to lament or condemn. In few memories, indeed, doth thy

image now survive ; for, in twenty years, what young face fadeth not away from eyes busied with the shows of this living world ?—What young voice is not bedumbed to ears for ever filled with its perplexing din ? Yet thou, Nature, on this glorious May-day, rejoicing in all the plenitude of thy bliss—I call upon thee to bear witness to the intensity of my never-dying grief ! Ye fields, that long ago we so often trod together, with the wind-swept shadows hovering about our path—ye streams, whose murmur awoke our imaginations, as we lay reading, or musing together in day-dreams, among the broomy braes—ye woods, where we started at the startled cushat, or paused, without a word, to hear the creature's solitary moans and murmurs deepening the far-off hush, already so profound—ye moors and mosses, black yet beautiful, with your peat-trenches overshadowed with the heather-blossoms that scented the wilderness afar,—where the little maiden, sent from her shieling on errands to town or village in the country below, seemed, as we met her in the sunshine, to rise up before us for our delight, like a fairy from the desert bloom—thou loch, remote in thy treeless solitude, and with nought reflected in thy many-springed waters but those low pastoral hills of such excessive green, and the white-barred blue of heaven ; no creature on its shores but our two selves, keenly angling in the breezes, or lying in the shaded sunshine, with some book of old ballads, or strain of some immortal yet alive on earth—one and all, bear witness to my undying affection, that silently now feeds on grief ! And, oh ! what overflowing thoughts did that shout of mine now awaken from the hanging tower of the old castle—“Wilton, Wilton !” The name of the long-ago buried faintly and afar off repeated by an echo !

A pensive shade, methinks, has fallen across MAY-DAY ; and while the sun is behind those castellated clouds, my imagination is willing to retire into the saddest places of memory, and gather together stories and tales of tears. And many such there are, annually sprinkled all round the humble huts of our imaginative and religious land, even like the wild flowers that, in endless succession, disappearing and reappearing in their beauty, spring

drops down upon every brae. And as oftentimes some one particular tune, some one pathetic but imperfect and fragmentary part of an old melody will nearly touch the heart, when it is dead to the finest and most finished strain; so now a faint and dim tradition comes upon me, giving birth to uncertain and mysterious thoughts. It is an old tradition. They were called the HOLY FAMILY! Far up at the head of yonder glen of old was their dwelling, and in their garden sparkled the translucent well that is the source of the stream that animates the parish with a hundred waterfalls. Father, mother, and daughter—it was hard to say which of the three was the most beloved! Yet they were not native here, but brought with them, from some distant place, the soft and silvery accents of the pure English tongue, and manners most gracious in their serene simplicity; while over a life composed of acts of charity was spread a stillness that nothing ever disturbed—the stillness of a thoughtful pity for human sins and sorrows, yet not unwilling to be moved to smiles by the breath of joy. In those days the heart of Scotland was distracted—persecution scattered her prayers—and during the summer months, families remained shut up in fear within their huts, as if the snowdrifts of winter had blocked up and buried their doors. It was as if the shadow of a thunder-cloud hung over all the land, so that men's hearts quaked as they looked up to heaven—when, lo! all at once, three gracious visitants appeared! Imagination invested their foreheads with a halo; and as they walked on their missions of mercy, exclaimed—How beautiful are their feet! Few words was the child ever heard to speak, except some words of prayer; but her image-like stillness breathed a blessing wherever it smiled, and all the little maidens loved her, when hushed almost into awe by her spiritual beauty, as she knelt with them in their morning and evening orisons. The mother's face, too, it is said, was pale as a face of grief, while her eyes seemed always happy, and a tone of thanksgiving was in her voice. Her husband leant upon her on his way to the grave—for his eye's excessive brightness glittered with death—and often, as he prayed beside the sick-bed, his cheek became like

ashes, for his heart in a moment ceased to beat, and then, as if about to burst in agony, sounded audibly in the silence. Journeying on did they all seem to heaven; yet as they were passing by, how loving and how full of mercy! To them belonged some blessed power to wave away the sword that would fain have smitten the saints. The dew-drops on the greensward before the cottage-door, they suffered not to be polluted with blood. Guardian angels were they thought to be, and such indeed they were, for what else are the holy powers of innocence,—guardian angels sent to save some of God's servants on earth from the choking tide and the scorching fire. Often, in the clear and starry nights, did the dwellers among all these little dells, and up along all these low hill-sides, hear music flowing down from heaven, responsive to the hymns of the Holy Family Music without the syllabbling of words—yet breathing worship, and with the spirit of piety filling all the night-heavens! One whole day and night passed by, and not a hut had been enlightened by their presence. Perhaps they had gone away without warning, as they had come—having been sent on another mission. With soft steps one maiden, and then another, entered the door, and then was heard the voice of weeping and of loud lament. The three lay, side by side, with their pale faces up to heaven. Dora, for that is the name tradition has handed down—Dorothea, the gift of God, lay between her father and her mother, and all their hands were lovingly and peacefully entwined. No agonies had been there—unknown what hand, human or divine, had closed their eyelids and composed their limbs; but there they lay as if asleep, not to be awakened by the burst of sunshine that dazzled upon their smiling countenances, cheek to cheek in the awful beauty of united death!

The deep religion of that troubled time had sanctified the strangers almost into an angelic character; and when the little kirk-bells were again heard tinkling through the air of peace, (the number of the martyrs being complete,) the beauty with which their living foreheads had been invested, reappeared to the eyes of imagination, as the poets whom Nature kept to herself, walked along the

noonlight hills. "The Holy Family," which had been as a household word, appertaining to them while they lived, now when centuries have gone by, is still of a dim but divine meaning; the spirit of the tradition having remained, while its framework has almost fallen into decay.

How beautifully emerges that sun-stricken cottage from the rocks, that all around it are floating in a blue vapoury light! Were I so disposed, methinks I could easily write a little book entirely about the obscure people that have lived and died about that farm, by name LOGAN BRAES! Neither is it without its old traditions. One May-day long ago—some two or three centuries since—that rural festival was there interrupted by a thunder-storm, and the party of youths and maidens, driven from the budding arbours, were all assembled in the ample kitchen. The house seemed to be in the very heart of the thunder; and the master began to read, without declaring it to be a religious service, a chapter of the Bible; but the frequent flashes of lightning so blinded him, that he was forced to lay down the Book, and all then sat still, without speaking a word; many with pale faces, and none without a mingled sense of awe and fear. The maiden forgot her bashfulness as the rattling peal shook the roof-tree, and hid her face in her lover's bosom; the children crept closer and closer, each to some protecting knee, and the dogs came all into the house, and lay down in dark places. Now and then there was a convulsive, irrepressible, but half-stifled shriek—some sobbed—and a loud hysterical laugh from one overcome with terror sounded ghastlily between the deepest of all dread repose—that which separates one peal from another, when the flash and the roar are as one, and the thick air smells of sulphur. The body feels its perishable and mortal nature, and shrinks as if about to be withered into nothing. Now the muttering thunder seems to have changed its place to some distant cloud—now, as if returning to blast those whom it had spared, waxes louder and fiercer than before—till the great tree that shelters the house is shivered with a noise like the masts of a ship carried away by the board in battle. "Look, father, look—see yonder is an

angel all in white, descending from heaven," said little Alice, who had been almost in the attitude of prayer, and now clasped her hands together, and steadfastly, and without fear of the lightning, eyed the sky. "One of God's holy angels—one of those who sing before the Lamb;" and with an inspired rapture the fair child sprung to her feet. "See ye her not—see ye her not—father—mother? Lo! she beckons to me with a palm in her hand, like one of the palms in that picture in our Bible, when our Saviour is entering into Jerusalem! There she comes, nearer and nearer the earth—Oh! pity, forgive, and have mercy on me, thou most beautiful of all the angels,—even for His name's sake." All eyes were turned towards the black heavens, and then to the raving child. Her mother clasped her to her bosom, afraid that terror had turned her brain—and her father going to the door, surveyed an ampler space of the sky. She flew to his side, and clinging to him again, exclaimed, in a wild outcry, "On her forehead a star! on her forehead a star! And oh! on what lovely wings she is floating away, away into eternity! The angel, father, is calling me by my Christian name, and I must no more abide on earth; but touching the hem of her garment, be wafted away to heaven!" Sudden as a bird let loose from the hand, darted the maiden from her father's bosom, and with her face upward to the skies, pursued her flight. Young and old left the house, and at that moment the forked lightning came from the crashing cloud, and struck the whole tenement into ruins. Not a hair on any head was singed; and with one accord all the people fell down upon their knees. From the eyes of the child, the angel, or vision of the angel, had disappeared; but on her return to heaven, the celestial heard the hymn that rose from those that were saved, and above all the voices, the small sweet silvery voice of her whose eyes alone were worthy of beholding a saint transfigured, for she had known no sin, and her spirit was taken, as the tradition says, that very night to the abodes of eternal bliss.

For several hundred years has that farm belonged to the family of the Logans, nor has son or daughter ever stained the name—while some have imparted to it, in its

humble annals, what may well be called lustre. Many a time have I stood when a boy, all alone, beginning to be disturbed by the record of heroic or holy lives, in the kirkyard, beside the GRAVE OF THE MARTYRS—the grave in which Christian and Hannah Logan, mother and daughter, were interred. Many a time have I listened to the story of their deaths, from the lips of one who knew well how to stir the hearts of the young, “till from their eyes they wiped the tears that sacred pity had engendered.” Upwards of a hundred years old was she that eloquent narrator—the minister’s mother—yet she could hear a whisper, and read the Bible without spectacles—although we sometimes used to suspect her of pretending to be reading off the Book, when, in fact, she was reciting from memory. The old lady often took a walk into the kirkyard—and being of a pleasant and cheerful nature, though in religious principles inflexibly austere, many were the most amusing anecdotes that she related to me and my compeers, all huddled round her, “where heaved the turf in many a mouldering heap.” But the evening converse was always sure to have a serious termination—and the venerable matron could not be more willing to tell, than were we to hear again and again, were it for the twentieth repetition, some old tragic event that gathered a deeper interest from every recital, as if on each we became better and better acquainted with the characters of those to whom it had befallen, till the chasm that time had dug between them and us disappeared; and we felt for the while that their happiness or misery and ours were essentially mingled and interdependent. At first she used, I well remember, to fix her solemn spirit-like eyes on our faces, to mark the different effects her story produced on her hearers; but ere long she became possessed wholly by the pathos of her own narrative, and with fluctuating features and earnest action of head and hands, poured forth her eloquence, as if soliloquizing among the tombs. “Ay, ay, my dear boys, that is the grave o’ the Martyrs. My father saw them die. The tide o’ the far-ebbed sea was again beginning to flow, but the sands o’ the bay o’ death lay sae dry,

that there were but few spots whare a bairn could hae wat its feet.

“Thousands and tens o’ thousands were standing a’ roun’ the edge of the bay—that was in shape just like that moon—and twa stakes were driven deep into the sand, that the waves o’ the returning sea micht na loosen them—and then my father, who was but a boy like ane o’ yourselves noo, waes me, didna he see wi’ his ain een Christian Logan, and her wee dochter Hannah, for she was but eleven years auld—hurried along by the enemies o’ the Lord, and tied to their accursed stakes within the power o’ the sea. He who holds the waters in the hollow o’ his hand, thocht my father, will not suffer them to choke the prayer within those holy lips—but what kent he o’ the dreadful judgments o’ the Almighty? Dreadfu’ as those judgments seemed to be, o’ a’ that crowd o’ mortal creatures there were but only twa that drew their breath without a shudder—and these twa were Christian Logan and her beautifu’ wee dochter Hannah, wi’ her rosy cheeks, for they blanched not in that last extremity, her blue e’en, and her gouden hair, that glittered like a star in the darkness o’ that dismal day. ‘Mother, be not afraid,’ she was heard to say, when the foam o’ the first wave broke about their feet—and just as these words were uttered, all the great black clouds melted away from the sky, and the sun shone forth in the firmament, like the all-seeing eye of God. The martyrs turned their faces a little towards one another, for that the cords could not wholly hinder, and wi’ voices as steady and as clear as ever they sang the psalm wi’ within the walls o’ that kirk, did they, while the sea was mounting up—up from knee—waist—breast—neck—chin—lip—sing praise and thanksgivings unto God. As soon as Hannah’s voice was drowned, it seemed as if her mother, before the water reached her own lips, bowed and gave up the ghost. While the people were all gazing, the heads of both martyrs disappeared, and nothing then was to be seen on the face o’ the waters, but here and there a bit white breaking wave, or silly sea-bird that had come from afar, floating on the flow o’ the tide into that sheltered bay. Back and back

had aye fallen the people, as the tide was roarin' on wi' a hollow soun'—and now that the water was high above the heads o' the martyres, what chained that dismal congregation to the sea-shore? It was the countenance o' a man that had suddenly come down from his hiding-place among the moors,—and who now knew that his wife and daughter were bound to stakes deep down in the waters o' the very bay that his eyes beheld rolling, and his ears heard roaring—all the while that there was a God in heaven! Naebody could speak to him—although they all beseeched their Maker to have compassion upon him, and not to let his heart break and his reason fail in the uttermost distraction o' despair. 'The stakes! the stakes! Oh! Jesus! point out to me, with thy own scarred hand, the place where my wife and daughter are bound to the stakes,—and I may yet bear them up out of the sand, and bury the bodies ashore—to be restored to life! O brethren, brethren,—said ye that my Christian and my Hannah have been for an hour below the sea? And was it from fear of fifty armed men, that so many thousand fathers and mothers and sons and daughters, and brothers and sisters, rescued them not from such cruel, cruel death?' After uttering many more raving words, he suddenly plunged into the sea, and being a strong swimmer, was soon far out into the bay,—and led, as if by some holy instinct, even to the very place where the stake was fixed in the sand! Perfectly resigned had the martyrs been to their doom,—but in the agonies o' that horrible death, there had been some struggles o' the mortal body, and the weight o' the waters had borne down the stakes, so that, just as if they had been lashed to a spar to enable them to escape frae shipwreck, lo! both the bodies came floatin' to the surface, and his hand grasped, without knowing it, his ain Hannah's gouden hair,—sorely defiled, ye may weel think, wi' the sand; and baith their faces changed frae what they ance were by the wrench o' death. Father, mother, and daughter came altogether to the shore,—and there was a cry went far and wide, up even to the hiding-places o' the faithful among the hags and cleuchs i' the moors, that the sea had given up the living, and that the martyrs were triumphant, even in this world,

over the powers o' Sin and o' Death. Yea, they were indeed triumphant;—and well might the faithfu' sing aloud in the desert, 'O Death, where is thy sting, O Grave, where is thy victory?' for those three bodies were but as the weeds on which they lay stretched out to the pitying gaze of the multitude, but their spirits had gane to heaven, to receive the eternal rewards of sanctity and truth."

Not a house in all the parish—scarcely excepting Mount Pleasant itself—all around and about which my heart could in some dreamy hour raise to life a greater multitude of dear old remembrances, all touching myself, than LOGAN BRAES. The old people we used, when we first knew them, to think somewhat apt to be surly—for they were Seceders—and owing to some unavoidable prejudices, which we were at no great pains to vanquish, we Manse-boys recognised something repulsive in that most respectable word. Yet for the sake of that sad story of the martyrs, there was always something affecting to us in the name of Logan Braes; and though Beltane was of old a Pagan festival, celebrated with grave idolatries round fires a-blaze on a thousand hills,—yet old Laurence Logan would sweeten his vinegar aspect on May-day, would wipe out a score of wrinkles, and calm, as far as that might be, the terrors of his shaggy eyebrows. A little gentleness of manner goes a long way with such children as we were all then, when it is seen naturally, and easily worn for our sakes, and in sympathy with our accustomed glee, by one who, in his ordinary deportment, may have added the austerity of religion to the venerableness of old age. Smiles from old Laurence Logan the Seceder, were like rare sun-glimpses in the gloom—and made the hush of his house pleasant as a more cheerful place; for through the restraint laid on reverent youth by a feeling akin to fear, the heart ever and anon bounded with freedom in the smile of the old man's eye. Plain was his own apparel—a suit of the hoddengray. His wife when in full dress, did not remind me of a Quakeress, for a Quakeress then had I never seen—but I often think now, when in company with a still, sensible, cheerful, and comely visaged matron of that sect, of her of Logan Braes.

No waster was she of her tears, or her smiles, or her words, or her money, or her meal—either among those of her own blood, or the stranger or the beggar that was within her gates. You heard not her foot on the floor—yet never was she idle—moving about in doors and out, from morning till night, so placid, and so composed, and always at small cost dressed so decently, so becomingly to one who was not yet old, and had not forgotten—why should she not remember it—that she was esteemed in youth a beauty, and that it was not for want of a richer and younger lover, that she agreed at last to become the wife of the Laird of Logan Braes.

Their family consisted of two sons and a niece;—and be thou who thou mayest, that hast so far read my May-day, I doubt not that thine eyes will glance—however rapidly—over another page, nor fling Maga contemptuously aside, because amidst all the chance and change of administrations, ministries, and ministers in high places, there murmur along the channels of her columns, the simple annals of the poor, like unpolluted streams that sweep not by city walls.

Never were two brothers more unlike in all things,—in mind, body, habits, and disposition,—than Laurence and Willie Logan,—and I see as in a glass, at this very moment, both their images. “Wee Wise Willie”—for by that name he was known over several parishes—was one of those extraordinary creatures that one may liken to a rarest plant, which nature sows here and there—sometimes for ever unregarded—among the common families of flowers. Early sickness had been his lot—continued with scarcely any interruption from his cradle to school-years—so that not only was his stature stunted, but his whole frame was delicate in the extreme: and his pale small-featured face, remarkable for large, soft, down-looking, hazel eyes, dark-lashed in their lustre, had a sweet feminine character, that corresponded well with his voice, his motion, and his indoor pursuits—all serene and composed, and interfering with the ongoings of no other living thing.

All sorts of scholarship, such as the parish schoolmaster knew, he mastered as if by intuition. His slate was

quickly covered with long calculations, by which the most puzzling questions were solved; and ere he was nine years old, he had made many pretty mechanical contrivances, with wheels and pulleys, that showed in what direction lay the natural bent of his genius. Languages, too, the creature seemed to see into with quickest eyes, and with quickest ears to catch their sounds,—so that, at the same tender age, he might have been called a linguist, sitting with his Greek and Latin books on a stool beside him by the fireside during the long winter nights. All the neighbours who had any books cheerfully lent them to “Wee Wise Willie,” and the Manse-boys gave him many a delightful supply. At the head of every class he, of course, was found—but no ambition had he to be there—and like a bee that works among many thousand others on the clover-leaf, heedless of their murmurs, and intent wholly on its own fragrant toil, did he go from task to task—although that was no fitting name for the studious creature’s meditations, on all he read or wrought—no more a task for him to grow in knowledge and in thought, than for a lily of the field to lift up its head towards the sun. That child’s religion was like all other parts of his character—as prone to tears as that of other children, when they read of the Divine Friend dying for them on the cross; but it was profounder far than theirs, when it shed no tears, and only made the paleness of his countenance more like that which we imagine to be the paleness of a ghost. No one ever saw him angry, complaining, or displeased, for angelical indeed was his temper, purified, like gold in fire, by disease. He shunned not the company of other children, but loved all, as by them all he was more than beloved. In few of their plays could he take an active share—but sitting a little way off, still attached to the merry brotherhood, though in their society he had no part to enact, he read his book on the knoll, or, happy happy dreamer, sunk away among the visions of his own thoughts. There was poetry in that child’s spirit, but it was too essentially blended with his whole happiness in life, often to be embodied in written words. A few compositions were found in his own small beautiful handwriting after his death—hymns and psalms! Prayers,

too, had his heart indited—but they were not in measured language—framed, in his devout simplicity, on the model of our Lord's. How many hundred times have we formed a circle round him in the gloaming, all sitting or lying on the greensward, before the dews had begun to descend, listening to his tales and stories of holy or heroic men and women who had been greatly good and glorious in the days of old! Not unendeared to his imagination were the patriots, who, living and dying, loved the liberties of the land—Tell—Bruce—or Wallace—he, in whose immortal name a thousand rocks rejoice, while many a wood bears it on its summits, as they are swinging to the storm. Weak as a reed that is shaken in the wind, or the stalk of a flower that tremblingly sustains its own fresh blossoms beneath the dews that feed their transitory lustre, was he whose lips were so eloquent to read the eulogies of mighty men of war riding mailed through bloody battles. What matters it that this frame of dust be faint, frail, fading, and of tiny size,—still may it be the tenement of a lordly spirit! But high as such warfare was, it satisfied not that wonderful child—for other warfare there was to read of, which was to him a far deeper and more divine delight—the warfare waged by good men against the legions of sin, and closed triumphant in the eye of God—let this world deem as it will—on obscurest deathbeds, or at the stake, or on the scaffold, where a profounder even than Sabbath silence glorifies the martyr far beyond a shout that, from the immense multitude, would have torn the concave of the heavens!

What a contrast to this creature was his elder brother! Laurie was seventeen years old when first I visited Logan Braes, and was a perfect hero in strength and stature. In the afternoons, after his work was over in the fields or in the barn, he had pleasure in getting us Manse-boys to accompany him to the Moor-Lochs for an hour's angling or two in the evening, when the large trouts came to the gravelly shallows, and, as we waded mid-leg deep, would sometimes take the fly among our very feet. Or he would go with us into the heart of the great wood, to show us where the foxes had their earths—the party being sometimes so fortunate as to see the cubs disporting at the

mouth of the briery aperture in the strong and root-bound soil. Or we followed him, so far as he thought it safe for us to do so, up the foundations of the castle, and in fear and wonder that no repetition of the adventurous feat ever diminished, saw him take the young starling from the crevice beneath the tuft of wall-flowers. What was there of the bold and daring that Laurie Logan was not, in our belief, able to perform? We were all several years younger—boys from nine to fifteen—and he had shot up into sudden manhood—not only into its shape but its strength—yet still the boyish spirit was fresh within him, and he never wearied of us in such excursions. The minister had a good opinion of his principles, knowing how he had been brought up, and did not discountenance his visits to the Manse, nor ours to Logan Braes. Then what danger could we be in, go where we might, with one who had more than once shown how eager he was to risk his own life when that of another was in jeopardy? Generous and fearless youth! To thee I owed my own life—although seldom is that rescue now remembered—(for what will not in this turmoiling world be forgotten?) when in the pride of the late-acquired art of swimming, I ventured—with my clothes on too—some ten yards into the Brother-Loch, to disentangle my line from the water-lilies. It seemed that a hundred cords had got entangled round my legs, and my heart quaked too desperately to suffer me to shriek—but Laurie Logan had his hand on me in a minute, and brought me to shore as easily as a Newfoundland dog lands a bit of floating timber. But that was a momentary danger, and Laurie Logan ran but small risk, you will say, in saving me; so let me not extol that instance of his intrepidity. So fancy to yourself, gentle reader, the hideous mouth of an old coal-pit, that had not been worked for time immemorial, overgrown with thorns, and briars, and brackens, but still visible from a small mount above it, for some yards down its throat—the very throat of death and perdition. But can you fancy also the childish and superstitious terror with which we all regarded that coal-pit, for it was said to be a hundred fathom deep—with water at the bottom—so that you had to wait for many moments—almost a minute—

before you heard a stone, first beating against its sides—from one to the other—plunge at last into the pool profound. In that very field, too, a murder had been perpetrated, and the woman's corpse flung by her sweetheart into that coal-pit. One day some unaccountable impulse had led a band of us into that interdicted field—which I remember was not arable—but said to be a place where a hare was always sure to be found sitting among the binweeds and thistles. A sort of thrilling horror urged us on closer and closer to the mouth of the pit—when Willie Logan's foot slipping on the brae, he bounded with inexplicable force along—in among the thorns, briers, and brackens—through the whole hanging mat, and without a shriek, down—down—down into destruction. We all saw it happen—every one of us—and it is scarcely too much to say, that we were for awhile all mad with distraction. Yet we felt ourselves borne back instinctively from the horrible grave—and as aid we could give none, unless God had granted to our prayers an angel's wings—we listened if we could hear any cry—but there was none—and we all flew together out of the dreadful field, and again collecting ourselves together, feared to separate on the different roads to our homes. “Oh! can it be that our Wee Wise Willie has this moment died sic a death—and no a single ane amang us a' greetin' for his sake?” said one of us aloud; and then indeed did we burst out into rueful sobbing, and ask one another who could carry such tidings to Logan Braes. All at once we heard a clear, rich, mellow whistle—as of a blackbird—and there with his favourite colley, searching for a stray lamb among the knolls, was Laurie Logan, who hailed us with a laughing voice, and then asked us, “Whare is Wee Willie?—hae ye flung him like another Joseph into the pit?” The consternation of our faces could not be misunderstood—whether we told him or not what had happened I do not know—but he staggered as if he would have fallen down—and then ran off with amazing speed—not towards Logan Braes—but the village. We continued in helpless horror to wander about back and forwards along the edge of a wood, when we

beheld a multitude of people rapidly advancing, and in a few minutes they surrounded the mouth of the pit.

It was about the very end of the hay-harvest—and a great many ropes, that had been employed that very day in the leading of the hay of the landlord of the inn, who was also an extensive farmer, were tied together to the length of at least fifty fathom. Hope was quite dead—but her work is often done by Despair. For a while, great confusion prevailed all round the pit-mouth, but with a white fixed face and glaring eyes, Laurie Logan advanced to the very brink, with the rope bound in many firm folds around him, and immediately behind him stood his grayheaded father, unbonneted, just as he had risen from a prayer. “Is’t my ain father that’s gaun to help me to gang doon to bring up Willie’s body?—O! merciful God, what a judgment is this! Father—father—Oh! lie down at some distance awa’ fra the sight o’ this place. Robin Alison, and Gabriel Strong, and John Borland, ’ll haud the ropes firm and safe. O, father—father—lie down, a bit apart frae the crowd; and have mercy upon him—O thou, great God, have mercy upon him!” But the old man kept his place; and the only one that now survived to him disappeared within the jaws of the same murderous pit, and was lowered slowly down, nearer and nearer to his little brother’s corpse. They had spoken to him of foul air, of which to breathe is death, but he had taken his resolution, and not another word had been said to shake it. And now, for a short time, there was no weight at the line, except that of its own length. It was plain, that he had reached the bottom of the pit. Silent was all that congregation, as if assembled in divine worship. Again, there was a weight at the rope, and in a minute or two, a voice was heard far down the pit that spread a sort of wild hope—else, why should it have spoken at all—and, lo! the child—not like one of the dead—clasped in the arms of his brother, who was all covered with dust and blood. “Fall all down on your knees—in the face o’ heaven, and sing praises to God, for my brother is yet alive!” And, as if with one heart, the congregation sang aloud,

“All people that on earth do dwell,
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice;
Him serve with mirth, his praise forth tell,
Come ye before him and rejoice.”
 &c. &c. &c.

But during that psalm, father, mother, and both their sons—the rescuer and the rescued—and their sweet cousin too, Annie Raeburn, the orphan, were lying embraced in speechless—almost senseless trances for the agony of such a deliverance was more than could well by mortal creatures be endured.

The child himself was the first to tell how his life had been miraculously saved. A few shrubs had for many years been growing out of the inside of the pit, almost as far down as the light could reach, and among them had he been entangled in his descent, and held fast. For days and weeks, and months after that deliverance, few persons visited Logan Braes, for it was thought that old Laurence’s brain had received a shock from which it might never recover; but the trouble that tried him subsided, and the inside of the house was again quiet as before, and its hospitable door open to all the neighbours.

Never forgetful of his primal duties,—but too apt to forget the many smaller ones that are wrapped round a life of poverty like invisible threads, and that cannot be broken violently or carelessly, without endangering the calm consistency of all its ongoings, and ultimately causing perhaps great losses, errors, and distress, was that bold boy. He did not keep evil society—but neither did he shun it; and having a pride in feats of strength and activity, as was natural to a stripling whose corporeal faculties could not be excelled, he frequented all meetings where he was likely to fall in with worthy competitors, and in such trials of power, by degrees acquired a character for recklessness, and even violence, of which prudent men prognosticated evil, and that sorely disturbed his parents, who were, in their quiet retreat, lovers of all peace. With what wonder and admiration did all the Manse-boys witness and hear reported the feats of Laurie Logan! It was he that, in pugilistic contest, vanquished Black King Carey the Egyptian, who travelled the country

with two wives and a wagon of Staffordshire pottery, and had struck the "Yokel!" as he called Laurie, in the midst of all the tents on Leddrie Green at the great annual Baldernoch fair. Six times did the bare and bronzed Egyptian bite the dust;—nor did Laurie Logan always stand against the blows of one whose provincial fame was high in England, as the head of the Rough-and-Ready School. Even now—as in an ugly dream—I see the combatants alternately prostrate, and returning to the encounter, covered with mire and blood. All the women left the green, and the old men shook their heads at such unchristian work; but Laurie Logan did not want backers in the shepherds and the ploughmen, to see fair play against all the attempts of the showmen and the Newcastle horse-coupers, who laid their money thick on the King; till a righthander in the pit of the stomach, which had nearly been the gipsy's everlasting quietus, gave the victory to Laurie, amid acclamations that would have fitlier graced a triumph in a better cause. But that day was an evil day to all at Logan Braes. A recruiting sergeant got Laurie into the tent, over which floated the colours of the 42d regiment, and in the intoxication of victory, whisky, and the bagpipe, the young champion was as fairly enlisted into his majesty's service, as ever young girl, without almost knowing it, was married at Gretna Green; and as the 42d were under orders to sail in a week, gold could not have bought off such a man, and Laurie Logan went on board a transport.

Logan Braes was not the same place—indeed, the whole parish seemed altered—after Laurie was gone, and our visits were thenceforth any thing but cheerful ones, going by turns to inquire for Willie, who seemed to be pining away—not in any deadly disease, but just as if he himself knew, that without ailing much he was not to be a long liver. Yet nearly two years passed on, and all that time the principle of life had seemed like a flickering flame within him, that when you think it expiring or expired, streams up again with surprising brightness, and continues to glimmer constantly with a protracted light. Every week—nay, almost every day, they feared to lose him—yet there he still was at morning and evening

prayers ! The second spring, after the loss of his brother, was remarkably mild, and breathing with west winds, that came softened over many woody miles from the sea. He seemed stronger, and more cheerful, and expressed a wish that the Manse-boys, and some others of his companions should come to Logan Braes, and once again celebrate May-Day. There we all sat at the long table, and both parents did their best to look cheerful during the feast. Indeed, all that had once been harsh and forbidding in the old man's looks and manners, was now softened down by the perpetual yearnings at his heart towards "the distant far, and absent long," nor less towards him—that peaceful and pious child—whom, every hour, he saw, or thought he saw, awaiting a call from the eternal voice. Although sometimes sadness fell across us like a shadow, yet the hours passed on as May-Day hours should do ; and what with our many-toned talk and laughter, the cooing of the pigeons on the roof, and the twittering of the swallows beneath the eaves, and the lark-songs ringing like silver bells over all the heavens, it seemed a day that ought to bring good tidings—or, the soldier himself returning from the wars to bless the eyes of his parents once more, so that they might die in peace. "Heaven hold us in its keeping, for there's his wraith !" ejaculated Annie Raeburn. "It passed before the window, and my Laurie, I now know, is with the dead !"—Bending his stately head beneath the lintel of the door, in the dress, and with the bearing of a soldier, Laurie Logan stepped again across his father's threshold, and ere he well uttered "God be with you all !" Willie was within his arms, and on his bosom. His father and his mother rose not from their chairs, but sat still, with faces like ashes. But we boys could not resist our joy, and shouted his name aloud—while Luath, from his sleep in the corner, leapt up on his master breast-high, whining his dumb delight, frisking round him as of yore, when impatient to snuff the dawn on the hillside. "Let us go out and play," said a boy's voice, and, issuing with whoop and hollo, into the sunshine, we left the family within to themselves, nor returned till Willie came for us down to the bridge.

The sun has mounted high in heaven, while thus I have

been somewhat idly dreaming away the hours—twenty miles at least have I slowly wandered over since the dawn, along pleasant by-paths, where never dust lay, or from gate to gate of pathless enclosures, a trespasser fearless of those threatening nonentities, spring-guns. There is the turnpike-road—the great north and south road—for it is either the one or the other, according to the air towards which you choose to turn your face. Lo! a little **WAYSIDE INN**, neatly thatched, and with a white-washed front, and a sign-board hanging from a tree, on which are painted the figures of two jolly gentlemen, one in kilts and the other in breeches, shaking hands cautiously across a running brook. The meal of all meals is a paulo-post-meridian breakfast. The rosiness of the combs of these strapping hens is good augury;—bark, a cackle from the barn—another egg is laid—and chanticleer, stretching himself up on tip-claw, and clapping his wings of the bonny beaten gold, crows aloud to his sultana till the welkin rings. “Turn to the left, sir, if you please,” quoth a comely matron, about my own age; and I find myself snugly seated in an arm-chair, not wearied, but to rest willing, while the clock ticks pleasantly, and I take no note of time but by its gain; for here is my journal, in which I shall put down a few jottings for a leading article, to be called **MAY-DAY**. Three boiled eggs—one to each penny-roll—are sufficient, under any circumstances, along with the same number fried with mutton-ham, for the breakfast of a gentleman and a Tory. Nor do we remember—when tea cups have been on a proper scale, ever to have wished to go beyond the golden rule of three. In politics, we confess that we are rather ultra—but in all things else we love moderation.—“Come in, my bonny little lassie—ye needna keep keekin’ in that gate frae ahint the door”—and in a few minutes the curly-pated prattler is murmuring on my knee. The sonsie wife, well pleased with the sight, and knowing, from my kindness to children, that I am on the same side of politics with her gude-man—ex-sergeant in the Black Watch, and once orderly to Garth himself—brings out her ain bottle from the spence—a hollow square, and green as emerald. Bless the gurgle of its honest mouth! With prim lips mine

hostess kisses the glass, previously letting fall a not inelegant curtsy—for she had, I now learned, been a lady's maid in her youth to one who is indeed a lady, all the time her lover was abroad in the army, in Egypt, Ireland, and the West Indies, and Malta, and Guernsey, Sicily, Portugal, Holland, and, I think she said, Corfu. One of the children has been sent to the field, where her husband is sowing barley, to tell him that there is fear lest dinner should cool—and the mistress now draws herself up in pride of his noble appearance, as the stately Highlander salutes me with the respectful, but bold air of one who has seen a little service at home and abroad. Never knew I a man make other than a good bow, who had partaken often and freely of a charge of bayonets.

Shenstone's lines about always meeting the warmest welcome in an inn, are very natural and tender—as most of his compositions are, when he was at all in earnest. For my own part, I cannot complain of ever meeting any other welcome than a warm one, go where I may; for I am not obtrusive, and where I am not either liked, or loved, or esteemed, or admired, (that last is a strong word, yet we have all our admirers,) I am exceeding chary of the light of my countenance. But at an inn, the only kind of welcome that is indispensable, is a civil one. When that is not forthcoming, I shake the dust, or the dirt off my feet, and pursue my journey, well assured that a few milestones will bring me to a humaner roof. Incivility and surliness have occasionally given me opportunities of beholding rare celestial phenomena—meteors—falling, and shooting stars—the Aurora Borealis, in her shifting splendours,—haloes round the moon, variously bright as the rainbow—electrical arches forming themselves on the sky in a manner so wondrously beautiful, that I should be sorry to hear them accounted for by philosophers—one half of the horizon blue, and without a cloud, and the other driving tempestuously like the sea-foam, with waves mountain-high—and divinest show of all for a solitary night-wandering man, who has any thing of a soul at all, far and wide, and high up into the gracious heavens, planets and stars all burning as if their urns were newly fed with light, not twinkling as they do in a

dewy or a vapoury night, although then, too, are the softened or veiled luminaries beautiful—most beautiful—but large, full, and free over the whole firmament—a galaxy of shining and unanswerable arguments in proof of the immortality of the soul.

The whole world is improving; nor can there be a pleasanter proof of that than this very wayside inn—ycleped the SALUTATION. Twenty years ago, what a miserable pot-house it was, with a rusty-hinged door, that would neither open nor shut—neither let you out nor in—immoveable and intractable to foot or hand—or all at once, when you least expected it to yield, slamming to with a bang;—a constant puddle in front during rainy weather, and heaped up dust in dry,—roof partly thatched, partly slated, partly tiled, and partly open to the elements, with its naked rafters! Broken windows repaired with an old petticoat, or a still older pair of breeches, and walls that had always been plastered, and better plastered, in frosty weather, all labour in vain, as crumbling patches told, and variegated streaks, and stains of dismal ochre, meanest of all colours, and still symptomatic of want, mismanagement, bankruptcy, and perpetual flittings from a tenement that was never known to have paid any rent. Then what a pair of drunkards were Saunders Donald and his spouse! Yet never once were they seen drunk on a Sabbath, or a fast-day—regular kirk-goers, and attentive observers of ordinances! They had not very many children, yet, pass the door when you might, you were sure to hear a squall or a shriek, or the ban of the mother, or the smacking of the palm of the hand on the part of the enemy easiest of access; or you saw one of the ragged fiends pursued by a parent round the corner, and brought back by the hair of the head till its eyes were like those of a Chinese. Now, what decency—what neatness—what order—in this household—this private public!—into which customers step like neighbours on a visit, and are served with a heartiness and good-will that deserves the name of hospitality, for it is gratuitous, and can only be repaid in kind. A limited prospect does that latticed window command, (and the small panes cut objects into too many parts) little more than the breadth of the turn-

pike road ; and a hundred yards of the same, to the north and to the south, with a few budding hedgerows, half a dozen trees, and some green braes. Yet could I sit and moralize, and intellectualize, for hours at this window, nor hear the striking clock. There trips by a blooming maiden of middle degree, all alone—the more's the pity—yet perfectly happy in her own society, and one that never received a love-letter, valentines excepted, in all her innocent days. A fat man sitting by himself in a gig ! somewhat red in the face, as if he had dined early, and not so sure of the road as his horse, who has drank nothing but a single pailfull of water, and is anxious to get to town that he may be rubbed down, and see oats once more. Scamper away, ye joyous schoolboys, and, for your sake, may that cloud breathe forth rain and breeze, before you reach the river, which you seem to fear may run dry before you can see the pool where the two-pounders lie. Methinks I know that old woman, and of the first novel I write she shall be the heroine. Ha ! a brilliant bevy of mounted maidens, in riding-habits, and Spanish hats, with “swaling feathers”—sisters, it is easy to see, and daughters of one whom I either loved, or thought I loved ; but now they say she is fat and vulgar, is the devil's own scold, and makes her servants and her husband lead the lives of slaves. All that I can say is, that twenty years ago it was *toute une autre chose* ; for a smaller foot, a slimmer ankle, a more delicate waist, arms more lovely, reposing in their gracefulness beneath her bosom, tresses of brighter and more burnished auburn—such starlike eyes, thrilling without seeking to reach the soul—but phoo ! phoo ! phoo ! she married a jolter-headed squire, with three thousand acres, and, in self-defence, has grown fat, vulgar, and a scold. There is a head for a painter ! and what perfect peace and placidity all over the blind man's countenance ! He is not a beggar, although he lives on alms—these sightless orbs ask not for charity, nor yet those withered hands, as staff-supported, he stops at the kind voice of the traveller, and tells his story in a few words. On the ancient dervise moves, with his long silvery hair, journeying contendedly in darkness towards the eternal light ! A gang of gipsies ! with their numerous assery laden with

horn-spoons, pots, and pans, and black-eyed children. I should not be surprised to read some day in the newspapers, that the villain who leads the van had been executed for burglary, arson, and murder. That is the misfortune of having a bad physiognomy, a sidelong look, a scarred cheek, and a cruel grin about the muscles of the mouth; to say nothing about rusty hair protruding through the holes of a brown hat, not made for the wearer,—long, sinewy arms, all of one thickness, terminating in huge, hairy, horny hands, chiefly knuckles and nails, a shambling gait, notwithstanding that his legs are finely proportioned, as if the night prowler were cautious not to be heard by the sleeping house, nor to waken—so noiseless are his stealthy advances—the unchained mastiff in his kennel.

But, hark! the spirit-stirring music of fife and drum! A whole regiment of soldiers on their march to replace another whole regiment of soldiers,—and that is as much as I can be expected to know about their movements. Food for the cannon's mouth; but the maw of war has been gorged and satiated, and the glittering soap-bubbles of reputation, blown by windy-checked Fame from the bole of her pipe, have all burst as they have been clutched by the hands of tall fellows in red raiment, and with feathers on their heads, just before going to lie down on what is called the bed of honour. Melancholy, indeed, to think, that all these fine, fierce, ferocious fire-eaters are doomed, but for some unlooked-for revolution in the affairs of Europe and the world, to die in their beds! Yet there is some comfort in thinking of the composition of a company of brave defenders of their country. It is, we shall suppose, seventy strong. Well, jot down three ploughmen, genuine clodhoppers, claw-bacons *sans peur et sans reproche*, except that the overseers of the parish were upon them with orders of affiliation; add one shepherd, who made contradictory statements about the number of the spring lambs, and in whose house had been found during winter certain fleeces, for which no ingenuity could account; a laird's son, long known by the name of the Neerdoweel; a man of tailors, forced to accept the bounty-money during a protracted strike,—not dungs

they, but flints all the nine; a barber, like many a son of genius, ruined by his wit, and who, after being driven from pole to pole, found refuge in the army at last; a bankrupt butcher, once a bully, and now a poltroon; two of the seven young men—all that now survive—impatient of the drudgery of the compting-house, and the injustice, of the age,—but they, I believe, are in the band—the trombone and the serpent; twelve cotton-spinners at the least; six weavers of woollens; a couple of colliers from the bowels of the earth; and a score of miscellaneous rabble—flunkies long out of place, and unable to live on their liveries—felons acquitted, or that have dreed their punishment—picked men from the shilling galleries of playhouses—and the élite of the refuse and sweepings of the jails. Look how all the rogues and reprobates march like one man! Alas! is it of such materials that our conquering army was made?—are such the heroes of Talavera, Salamanca, Vittoria, and Waterloo?—A baggage-wagon stops on the road, and some refreshment is sent for to the women and children. Ay, creatures not far advanced in their teens are there,—a year ago, at school or service, happy as the day was long; now mothers, with babies at their breasts—happy still perhaps; but that pretty face is wofully wan—that hair did not use to be so dishevelled—and bony, and clammy, and blue-veined is the hand that, a twelvemonth ago, lay so white, and warm, and smooth, in the grasp of the seducer. Yet she thinks she is his wife; and, in truth, there is a ring on her marriage-finger. But should the regiment embark, so many women, and no more, are suffered to go with a company—and should one of the lots not fall on her—she may take of her husband an everlasting farewell. The Highflyer coach! carrying six in, and twelve outsides—driver and guard excluded—rate of motion eleven miles an hour with stoppages. Why, in the name of heaven, are all people now-a-days in such haste and hurry? Is it absolutely necessary that one and all of this dozen and a half Protestants and Catholics—alike anxious for emancipation—should be at a particualar place at one very particular precise moment of time, out of the twenty-four hours given to man for motion

and for rest? Confident am I, that that obese elderly gentleman beside the coachman, whose ample rotundity was incased in that antique and almost obsolete invention, a spencer—needed not to have been so carried in a whirlwind to his comfortable home. Scarcely was there time for pity, as I beheld an honest man's wife pale as putty in the face, at a tremendous swing, or lounge, or lurch of the Highflyer, and holding like grim death to the balustrades. But umbrellas, parasols, plaids, shawls, bonnets, and great-coats with as many necks as a Hydra—the pile of life has disappeared in a cloud of dust, and the faint bugle tells that already it has spun and reeled onwards a mile! But here comes a vehicle at a more rational pace! Mercy on us—a hearse and six horses returning leisurely from a funeral! Not improbable that the person who has just quitted it, had never, till he was a corpse, got higher than a single-horse shay—yet no fewer than half-a-dozen hackneys must be hired for his dust. “Hurra! hurra! he rides a race, ’tis for a thousand pound!” Another, and another, and another—all working away with legs and knees, arms and shoulders, on cart-horses in the Brooze—the Brooze! The hearse-horses take no sort of notice of the cavalry of cart and plough, but each in turn keeps its snorting nostrils deep plunged in the pail of meal and water—for well may they be thirsty—the kirkyard being far among the hills, and the roads not yet civilized. “May I ask, friend,” addressing myself to the hearseman, “whom you have had inside?” “Only Dr. Sandilands, sir—if you are going my way, you may have a lift for a dram!” I had always thought there was a superstition in Scotland against marrying in the month of May; but it appears that people are wedded and bedded in that month too—some in warm sheets—and some in cold—cold—cold—dripping damp as the grave!

But I must up and off. Not many gentlemen's houses in the parish—that is to say, old family seats,—for of modern villas, or boxes, inhabited by persons imagining themselves gentlemen, and for any thing I know to the contrary, not wholly deceived in that belief, there is rather too great an abundance. Four family-seats, however,

there certainly are, of sufficient antiquity to please a lover of the olden time; and of these four, the one which I used to love best to look at, was—THE MAINS. No need to describe it in many words. A hall on a river-side, embosomed in woods,—holms and meadows winding away in front, with their low thick hedgerows and stately single trees,—on—on—on—as far as the eye can reach, a crowd of grove-tops—elms chiefly, or beeches—and a beautiful boundary of blue mountains, where the red-deer rove. “Good-day, Sergeant Stewart,—farewell Ma’am—farewell,”—and in half-an-hour I am sitting in the moss-house at the edge of the outer garden, and gazing up at the many-windowed gray walls of the MAINS, and its high steep-ridged roof, discoloured into beauty by the weather-stains of centuries. “The taxes on such a house,” quod Sergeant Stewart, “are of themselves enough to ruin a man of moderate fortune,—so the Mains, sir, has been uninhabited for a good many years.” But he was speaking to one who knew far more about the Mains than he could do,—and who was not sorry that the old place was allowed to stand undisturbed by any rich upstart, in the venerable silence of its own decay. And this is the moss-house that I helped to build with my own hands,—at least to hang the tapestry, and stud the cornice with shells! I was the paviour of that pebbled floor,—and that bright scintillating piece of spar, the centre of the circle, came all the way from Derbyshire in the knapsack of a geologist, who is now a Professor. It is strange the roof has not fallen in long ago,—but what a slight ligature will often hold together a heap of ruins from tumbling into utter decay! The old moss-house, though somewhat decrepit, is quite alive,—and if these swallows don’t take care, they will be stunning themselves against my face, jerking out and in, through door and window, twenty times in a minute. Yet with all that twittering of swallows—and with all that frequent cawing of rooks—and cooing of doves—and lowing of cattle too along the holms—and bleating of lambs along the braes—it is nevertheless a pensive place; and here sit I like a hermit, world-sick, and to be revived only by hearkening in the solitude to the voices of other years!

What more mournful thought than that of a decayed family—a high-born race gradually worn out, and finally ceasing to be! The remote ancestors of that house were famous men of war—then some no less famous statesmen—then poets and historians—then minds still of fine, but of less energetic mould—and last of all, the mystery of madness breaking suddenly forth from spirits, that seemed to have been especially formed for profoundest peace! There were three sons and two daughters, undegenerate from the ancient stateliness of the race. The oldest not yet approaching manhood, but erect as the young cedar, that seems conscious of being destined one day to be the tallest tree in the woods. The twin-sisters were ladies indeed! Lovely as often are the low-born, no maiden ever stepped from her native cottage-door, even in a poet's dream, with such an air as that with which those fair beings walked along their saloons and lawns. Their beauty no one could ever at all describe—and no one ever beheld it for the first time, who did not say that it transcended all that imagination had ever been able to picture of something angelic and divine.

As the sisters were, so were the brothers—distinguished above all their mates conspicuously, and beyond all possibility of mistake; so that strangers could single them out at once, as the heirs of beauty, that according to veritable pictures and true traditions, had been an unalienable gift from nature to that family ever since it bore the name. For the last three generations, none of that house had ever reached even the meridian of life—and those of whom I now speak had from childhood been orphans. Yet how joyous and free were they one and all, and how often from this cell did evening hear their holy harmonies, as the five united together with voice, harp, and the dulcimer, till the stars themselves rejoiced!—One morning, Louisa, who loved the dewy dawn, was met bewildered in her mind, and perfectly astray—with no symptom of having been suddenly alarmed or terrified—but with an unrecognising smile, and eyes scarcely changed in their expression, although they knew not—but rarely—on whom they looked. It was but a few

months till she died—and Adelaide was laughing carelessly on her sister's funeral day—and asked why mourning should be worn at a marriage, and a plumed hearse sent to take away the bride. Fairest of God's creatures! can it be that thou art still alive? Not with cherubs smiling round thy knees—not walking in the free realms of earth and heaven with thy husband—the noble youth, who loved thee from thy childhood when himself a child—but oh! that such misery can be beneath the sun—shut up in some narrow cell perhaps—no one knows where—whether in this thy native kingdom, or in some foreign land—with those hands manacled—a demon-light in eyes once most angelical—and ringing through undistinguished days and nights imaginary shriekings and yellings in thy poor distracted brain! Down went the ship with all her crew in which Percy sailed—the sabre must have been in the hand of a skilful swordsman that in one of the Spanish battles hewed Sholto down—and the gentle Richard—whose soul—while he possessed it clearly—was for ever among the sacred books, although too too long he was as a star vainly sought for in a cloudy region, yet did for a short time starlike reappear—and on his death-bed, he knew me and the other mortal creatures weeping beside him, and that there was One who had died to save sinners!

Let me away—let me away from this overpowering place—and make my escape from such unendurable sadness. Is this fit celebration of merry May-Day? and this the spirit in which I ought to look over the bosom of the earth, all teeming with buds and flowers, just as man's heart should be teeming—and why not mine—with hopes and joys! Yet beautiful as this May-Day is—and all the country round, which it so tenderly illumines—I came not hither, a solitary pilgrim from my distant home, to indulge myself in a joyful happiness. No, hither came I purposely to weep—even to weep—among the scenes which in blessed boyhood I seldom gazed on through the glimmer of tears. And therefore I have chosen the gayest day of all the year, when all life is rejoicing, from the grasshopper among my feet to the lark in the cloud. Melancholy, and

not mirth, doth he hope to find, who, after a life of wandering—and maybe not without sorrow—comes back to gaze on the banks and the braes whereon, to his eyes, once grew the flowers of Paradise. Flowers of Paradise are ye still—for praise be to heaven—the sense of beauty is still strong within me—and methinks that my soul could enjoy the beauty of such a rich vale as this is—even if my heart were broken! * * * * *

A DAY AT WINDERMERE.

(Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, 1830.)

OLD and gouty, we are confined to our chair ; and occasionally, during an hour of rainless sunshine, are wheeled by female hands along the gravel-walks of our Policy, an unrepining and philosophical valetudinarian. Even the crutch is laid up in ordinary, and is encircled with cobwebs. A monstrous spider has there set up his rest ; and our still study ever and anon hearkens to the shrill buz of some poor fly expiring between those formidable forceps—just as so many human ephemerals have breathed their last beneath the bite of his indulgent master. 'Tis pleasant to look at Domitian—so we love to call him—sallying from the centre against a wearied wasp, lying, like a silkworm, circumvolved in the inextricable toils, and then, seizing the sinner by the nape of the neck, like Christopher with a Cockney, to see the emperor haul him away into the charnel-house. But we have often less savage recreations : such as watching our beehives when about to send forth colonies—feeding our pigeons, a purple people that dazzle the daylight—gathering roses as they choke our small chariot-wheels with their golden orbs—eating grapes out of vine-leaf-draperyed baskets beautifying beneath the gentle fingers of the gentle into fairy network graceful as the gossamer—drinking elder-flower frontiniae from invisible glasses, so transparent in its yellowness seems the liquid radiance—at one moment eyeing a page of *Paradise Lost*, and at another of *Paradise Regained*, for what else is the face of her who often visiteth our Eden, and whose coming and whose going is ever like a heavenly dream ! Then laying

back our head upon the cushion of our triumphal car, and with half-shut eyes, subsiding slowly into haunted sleep or slumber, with our fine features up to heaven, a saintlike image, such as Raphael loved to paint, or Flaxman to embue with the soul of stillness in the life-bushed marble. Such, dearest reader, are some of our pastimes—and so do we contrive to close our ears to the sound of the scythe of Saturn, ceaselessly sweeping over the earth, and leaving, at every stride of the mower, a swathe more rueful than ever, after a night of shipwreck, did strew with ghastliness a lee sea-shore!

Thus do we make a virtue of necessity—and thus contentment wreathes with silk and velvet the prisoner's chains. Once were we—long, long ago—restless as a sunbeam on the restless waves—rapid as a river that seems enraged with the rocks, but all the while, you blockhead—(beg your pardon)—in love

“Doth make sweet music with th' enamell'd stones”—

strong as a steed let loose from Arab's tent in the oasis to slake his thirst at the desert wall—fierce in our harmless joy as a red-deer belling on the hills—tameless as the eagle sporting in the storm—gay as the “dolphin on a tropic sea”—“mad as young bulls”—and wild as a whole wilderness of adolescent lions. But now—alas! and alack-a-day! the sunbeam is but a patch of sober verdure—the river is changed into a canal—the “desert-born” is foundered—the red-deer is slow as an old ram—the eagle has forsook his cliff and his clouds, and hops among the gooseberry bushes—the dolphin has degenerated into a land-tortoise—without danger now might a very child take the bull by the horns—and though something of a lion still, our roar is, like that of the nightingale, “most musical, most melancholy”—and, as we attempt to shake our mane, your grandmother—fair subscriber—cannot choose but weep!

It speaks folios in favour of our philanthropy, to know that, in our own imprisonment, we love to see all life free as air. Would that by a word of ours we could clothe all human shoulders with wings! Would that by

a word of ours we could plume all human spirits with thoughts strong as the eagle's pinions, that they might winnow their way into the empyrean! Tories! Yes! we are Tories. Our faith is in the divine right of kings,—but easy, my boys, easy—all free men are kings, and they hold their empire from heaven. That is our political—philosophical—moral—religious creed. In its spirit we have lived—and in its spirit we hope to die—not on the scaffold like Sidney—no—no—no—not by any manner of means like Sidney on the scaffold—but like ourselves on a hair-mattress above a feather-bed, our head decently sunk in three pillows and one bolster, and our frame stretched out unagitatedly beneath a white counterpane! But meanwhile—though almost as unlocomotive as the dead—in body—there is perpetual motion in our souls. Sleep is one thing, and stagnation is another—as is well known to all eyes that have ever seen, by moonlight and midnight, the face of Christopher North, or of Windermere.

Windermere! Why, at this blessed moment, we behold the beauty of all its intermingling isles! There they are—all gazing down on their own reflected loveliness in the magic mirror of the air-like water, just as many a holy time we have seen them all agaze, when, with suspended oar and suspended breath—no sound but a ripple on the Naiad's bow, and a beating at our own heart—motionless in our own motionless bark—we seemed to float midway down that beautiful abyss, between the heaven above and the heaven below, on some strange terrestrial scene composed of trees and the shadows of trees by the imagination made indistinguishable to the eye, and as delight deepened into dreams, all lost at last, clouds, groves, water, air, sky, in their various and profound confusion of supernatural peace! But a sea-born breeze is on Bowness Bay; all at once the lake is blue as the sky; and that evanescent world is felt to have been but a vision. Like swans that had been asleep in the airless sunshine, lo! where from every shady nook appear the white-sailed pinnaces! For on merry Windermere—you must know—every breezy hour has its own regatta!

But intending to be useful, we are becoming ornamental; of this article it must not be said, that

“Pure description holds the place of sense”—

therefore, let us be simple, but not silly, as plain as is possible without being prosy, as instructive as is consistent with being entertaining, a cheerful companion and a trusty guide.

We shall suppose that you have left Kendal, and are on your way to Bowness. Forget, as much as may be, all worldly cares and anxieties, and let your hearts be open and free to all genial impulses about to be breathed into them from the beautiful and sublime in nature. There is no need of that foolish state of feeling called enthusiasm. You have but to be happy; and by and by your happiness will grow into delight. The blue mountains already set your imaginations at work; among those clouds and mists, you fancy many a magnificent precipice—and in the valleys that sleep below, you image to yourselves the scenery of rivers and lakes. The landscape immediately around gradually grows more and more picturesque and romantic; and you feel that you are on the very borders of Fairy-Land. The first smile of Windermere salutes your impatient eyes, and sinks silently into your heart. You know not how beautiful it may be—nor yet in what the beauty consists; but your finest sensibilities to nature are touched—and a tinge of poetry, as from a rainbow, overspreads that cluster of islands that seems to woo you to their still retreats. And now

“Wooded Winandermere, the river-lake,”

with all its bays and promontories, lies in the morning light serene as a Sabbath, and cheerful as a holiday; and you feel that there is loveliness on this earth more exquisite and perfect than ever visited your slumbers even in the glimpses of a dream. The first sight of such a scene will be unforgotten to your dying day—for such passive impressions are deeper than we can explain—our whole

spiritual being is suddenly awakened to receive them—and associations, swift as light, are gathered into one emotion of beauty which shall be imperishable, and which, often as memory recalls that moment, grows into genius, and vents itself in appropriate expressions, each in itself a picture. Thus may one moment minister to years; and the life-wearied heart of old age, by one delightful remembrance, be restored to primal joy—the glory of the past brought beamingly upon the faded present—and the world that is obscurely passing away from our eyes, reilluminated with the visions of its early morn. The shows of nature are indeed evanescent, but their spiritual influences are immortal; and from that grove now glowing in the sunlight, may your heart derive a delight that shall utterly perish but in the grave!

But now you are in the White Lion, and our advice to you—perhaps unnecessary—is immediately to order breakfast—there are many parlours—some with a charming prospect, and some without any prospect at all; but remember that there are other people in the world besides yourselves,—and therefore, into whatever parlour you may be shown by a pretty maid, be contented, and lose no time in addressing yourselves to your repast. That over, be in no hurry to get on the lake. Perhaps all the boats are engaged—and Billy Balmer is at the Water-head. So stroll into the churchyard, and take a glance over the graves. Close to the oriel-window of the church is one tomb over which one might meditate half an autumnal day! Enter the church, and you will feel the beauty of these fine lines in the Excursion—

“Not raised in nice proportions was the pile,
But large and massy; for duration built;
With pillars crowded, and the roof upheld
By naked rafters extricately cross'd,
Like leafless underboughs, mid some thick grove,
All wither'd by the depth of shade above!”

Go down to the low terrace-walk along the bay. The bay is in itself a lake, at all times cheerful with its scattered fleet, at anchor or under weigh—its villas and cottages, each rejoicing in its garden or orchard—its mea-

dows mellowing to the reedy margin of the pellucid water—its heath-covered boat-houses—its own portion of the isle called Beautiful—and beyond that silvan haunt, the sweet Furness Fells, with gentle outline undulating in the sky, and among its spiral larches showing, here and there, groves and copses of the old unviolated woods. Yes, Bowness Bay is in itself a lake; but how finely does it blend away, through its screens of oak and sycamore trees, into a larger lake—another, yet the same—on whose blue bosom you see bearing down to windward—for the morning breeze is born—many a tiny sail! It has the appearance of a race. Yes—it is a race; and the Liverpoolian, as of yore, is eating them all out of the wind, and without another tack will make her anchorage. But hark—music! 'Tis the Bowness band playing "See the conquering hero comes!"—and our old friend has carried away the gold cup from all competitors.

Now turn your faces up the hill above the village school. That green mount is what is called a—station. The villagers are admiring a grove of parasols, while you—the party—are admiring the village—with its irregular roofs—white, blue, gray, green, brown, and black walls—fruit-laden trees so yellow—its central church tower—and environing groves variously burnished by autumn. Saw ye ever banks and braes and knolls so beautifully bedropt with human dwellings? There is no solitude about Windermere. Shame on human nature, were Paradise uninhabited! Here, in amicable neighbourhood, are halls and huts—here rises through groves the dome of the rich man's palace,—and there the low roof of the poor man's cottage beneath its one single sycamore! Here are hundreds of properties hereditary in the same families for many hundred years—and never, never, O Westmoreland! may thy race of *statesmen* be extinct—nor the virtues that ennoble their humble households! See, suddenly brought forth by sunshine from among the old woods—and then sinking away into her usual unobtrusive serenity—the lake-loving Rayrig, almost level, so it seems, with the water, yet smiling over her own quiet bay from the grove-shelter of her pastoral mound! Within her walls may peace ever dwell with piety—and

the light of science long blend with the lustre of the domestic hearth. Thence to Calgarth is all one forest—yet glade broken, and enlivened by open uplands, so that the roamer, while he expects a night of umbrage, often finds himself in the open day, beneath the bright blue bow of heaven haply without a cloud. The eye travels delighted over the multitudinous tree-tops—often dense as one single tree—till it rests, in sublime satisfaction, on the far-off mountains, that lose not a woody character, till the tree-sprinkled pastures roughen into rocks—and rocks tower into precipices, where the falcons breed. But the lake will not suffer the eye long to wander among the distant glooms. She wins us wholly to herself—and restlessly and passionately for a while—but calmly and affectionately at last—the heart embraces all her beauty, and wishes that the vision might endure for ever, and that here our tent were pitched—to be struck no more during our earthly pilgrimage! Imagination lapses into a thousand moods. O for a fairy pinnacle to glide and float for aye over those golden waves! A hermit-cell on sweet Lady-Holm! A silvan shieling on Loughrig side! A nest in that nameless dell, which sees but one small slip of heaven, and longs at night for the reascending visit of its few loving stars! A dwelling open to all the skiey influence on the mountain-brow, the darling of the rising or the setting sun, and often seen by eyes in the lower world glittering through the rainbow!

All this seems a very imperfect picture indeed, or panorama of Windermere, from the hill behind the school-house in the village of Bowness. So, to put a stop to such nonsense, let us descend to the White Lion—and inquire about Billy Balmer. Billy has arrived from Waterhead—seems tolerably steady—Mr. Ullock's boats may be trusted—so let us take a voyage of discovery on the lake. Let those who have reason to think that they have been born to die a different death from drowning, hoist a sail. We to-day shall feather an oar. Billy takes the stroke—Mr. William Garnet's at the helm—and "row, vassals, row! for the pride of the Lowlands," is the choral song that accompanies the Naiad out of the bay, and round the north end of the isle called Beautiful, under the

wave-darkening umbrage of that ancient oak. And now we are in the lovely straits between that island and the mainland of Furness Fells. The village has disappeared, but not melted away; for, hark! the church-tower tolls ten,—and see the sun is high in heaven. High, but not hot—for the first September frosts chilled the rosy fingers of the morn as she bathed them in the dews, and the air is cool as a cucumber. Cool but bland—and as clear and transparent as a fine eye lighted up by a good conscience. There were breezes in Bowness Bay—but here there are none—or, if there be, they but whisper aloft in the tree-tops, and ruffle not the water, which is calm as Louisa's breast. The small isles here are but few in number—yet the best arithmetician of the party cannot count them—in confusion so rich and rare do they blend their shadows with those of the groves on the isle called Beautiful, and on the Furness Fells! A tide imperceptible to the eye, drifts us on among and above those beautiful reflections—that downward world of hanging dreams! and ever and anon we beckon unto Billy gently to dip his oar, that we may see a world destroyed and recreated in one moment of time. Yes! Billy! thou art a poet—and canst work more wonders with thine oar than could he with his pen who painted “heavenly Una with her milk-white lamb,” wandering by herself in Fairy-Land. How is it, pray, that our souls are satiated with such beauty as this? Is it because 'tis unsubstantial all—senseless, though fair—and its evanescence unsuited to the sympathies that yearn for the permanencies of breathing life? Dreams are delightful only as delusions within the delusion of this our mortal waking existence—one touch of what we call reality dissolves them all—blissful though they may have been, we care not when the bubble bursts—nay, we are glad again to return to our own natural world, care-haunted, though, in its happiest moods, it be—glad as if we had escaped from glamoury—and, oh! beyond expression sweet it is once more to drink the light of living eyes—the music of living lips—after that preternatural hush that steeps the shadowy realms of the imagination, whether stretching along a sunset heaven,

or the mystical imagery of earth and sky floating in the lustre of lake or sea.

Therefore "row, vassals, row, for the pride of the Lowlands," and as rowing is a thirsty exercise, let us land at the ferry, and each man refresh himself with a horn of ale.

There is not a prettier place on all Windermere than the Ferry-House, or one better adapted for a honeymoon. You can hand your bride into a boat almost out of the parlour window, and be off among the islands in a moment, or into nook or bay where no prying eye, even through telescope, (a most unwarrantable instrument,) can overlook your happiness; or you can secrete yourselves, like buck and doe, among the lady-fern on Furness Fells, where not a sunbeam can intrude on your sacred privacy, and where you may melt down hours to moments in chaste connubial bliss, brightening futurity with plans of domestic enjoyment, like long lines of lustre streaming across the lake. But at present, let us visit the fort-looking building among the cliffs, called The Station, and see how Windermere looks as we front the east. Why, you would not know it to be the same lake. The isle called Beautiful, which heretofore had scarcely seemed an isle, appearing to belong to one or other shore of the main land, from this point of view is an isle indeed, loading the lake with a weight of beauty, and giving it an ineffable character of richness which nowhere else does it possess, while the other lesser isles, dropt "in nature's careless haste" between it and the Furness Fells, connect it still with those lovely shores from which it floats a short way apart, without being disunited—one spirit blending the whole together within the compass of a fledgling's flight. Beyond these

"Sister isles that smile
Together like a happy family
Of beauty and of love,"

the eye meets the Rayrig woods, with but a gleam of water between, only visible in sunshine, and is gently conducted by them up the hills of Appletwhaite diversified with cultivated enclosures "all green as emerald," to

their very summits, with all their pastoral and arable grounds besprinkled with stately single trees, copses, or groves. On the nearer side of these hills is seen, stretching far off to other lofty regions—Hill-bell and High-street conspicuous over the rest—the long vale of Troutbeck, with its picturesque cottages, in “numbers without number numberless,” and all its sable pines and sycamores—on the farther side, that most silvan of all silvan mountains, where lately the Hemans warbled her native wood-notes wild in her poetic bower, fitly called Dovenest, and beyond, Kirkstone Fells and Rydal Head, magnificent giants looking westward to the Langdale Pikes, (here unseen.)

“The last that parley with the setting sun.”

Immediately in front, the hills are low and lovely, sloping with gentle undulations down to the lake, here grove-girdled along all its shores. The elm-grove that overshadows the Parsonage is especially conspicuous—stately and solemn in a green old age—and though now silent, in spring and early summer clamorous with rooks in love or alarm, an ancient family, and not to be expelled from their hereditary seats. Following the line of shore to the right, and turning your eyes unwillingly away from the bright and breezy Belfield, they fall on the elegant architecture of Storrs Hall, gleaming from a glade in the thick woods, and still looking southward, they see a serene series of the same forest scenery, along the heights of Gillhead and Gummer's How, till Windermere is lost, apparently narrowed into a river, beyond Townhead and Fellfoot, where the prospect is closed by a beaconed eminence clothed with shadowy trees to the very base of the Tower. The points and promontories jutting into the lake from these and the opposite shores—which are of a humbler, though not tame character—are all placed most felicitously—and as the lights and shadows keep shifting on the water, assume endless varieties of relative position to the eye, so that often during one short hour, you might think you had been gazing on Windermere with a kaleidoscopic eye that had seemed to create the beauty

which in good truth is floating there for ever on the bosom of nature.

That description, perhaps, is not so very much amiss; but should you think otherwise, be so good as give us a better—meanwhile let us descend from The Station—and its stained windows—stained into setting sunlight—frost and snow—the purpling autumn—and the first faint vernal green—and re-embark at the Ferry-House pier. Berkshire Island is fair—but we have always looked at it with an evil eye since unable to weather it in our old schooner, one day when the Victory, on the same tack, shot by it to windward like a salmon. But now we are half-way between Storri's Point and Rawlinson's Nab—so, my dear Garnet, down with the helm and let us put about (who is that catching crabs?) for a fine front view of the Grecian edifice. It does honour to the genius of Gandy—and say what people choose of a classic clime, the light of a Westmoreland sky falls beautifully on that marble-like stone, which, whether the heavens be in gloom or glory, “shines well where it stands,” and flings across the lake a majestic shadow. Methought there passed along the lawn the image of one now in his tomb! The memory of that bright day returns, when Windermere glittered with all her sails in honour of the great Northern Minstrel, and of him the Eloquent, whose lips are now mute in the dust. Methinks we see his smile benign—that we hear his voice silver-sweet!

“But away with melancholy,
Nor doleful changes ring”—

as such thoughts came like shadows, like shadows let them depart—and spite of that which happeneth to all men—“this one day we give to merriment.” Pull, Billy, pull—or we will turn you round—and in that case there is no refreshment nearer than Newby-bridge. The Naiad feels the invigorated impulse—and her cut-water murmurs to the tune of six knots through the tiny cataract foaming round her bows. The woods are all running down the lake—and at that rate, by two post meridiem will be in the sea.

Commend us—on a tour—to lunch and dinner in one. 'Tis a saving both of time and money—and of all the dinner-lunches that ever were set upon a sublunary table, the *facile principes* are the dinner-lunches you may devour in the White Lion, Bowness. Take a walk—and a seat on the green that overlooks the village, almost on a level with the lead-roof of the venerable church—while Hebe is laying the cloth for a repast fit for Jove, Juno, and the other heathen gods and goddesses—and if you must have politics—why, call for the Standard or Sun, (heavens! there is that Whig already at the Times,) and devote a few hurried and hungry minutes to the new French Revolution. Why, the green of all greens—often traced by us of yore beneath the midnight moonlight—till a path was worn along the edge of the low wall, still called “North’s Walk”—is absolutely converted into a reading-room, and our laking party into a political club. There is Louisa with the Leeds Intelligencer—and Matilda with the Morning Herald—and Harriet with that York paper worth them all put together—for it tells of Priam, and the Cardinal, and St. Nicholas,—but, hark! a soft footstep! And then a soft voice—no dialect or accent pleasanter than the Westmoreland—whispers that the dinner-lunch is on the table—and no reading article like a cold round of beef—or a veal-pie! Let the Parisians settle their constitution as they will—meanwhile let us strengthen ours—and after a single glass of Madeira—and a horn of home-brewed—let us off on foot—on horseback—in gig—car—and chariot—to Troutbeck.

It is about a couple of miles, we should think, from Bowness to Cook’s House—along the turnpike road—half the distance lying embowered in the Rayrig woods—and half open to lake, cloud, and sky. It is pleasant to lose sight now and then of the lake along whose banks you are travelling, especially if during separation you become a Druid. The water woos you at your return with her bluest smile, and her whitest murmur. Some of the finest trees in all the Rayrig woods have had the good sense to grow by the roadside, where they can see all that is passing, and make their own observations on us deciduous plants. Few of them seem

to be very old—much older than Christopher North—and, like him, they wear well, trunk sound to the core, arms with a long sweep, and head in fine proportions of cerebral developement, fortified against all storms—perfect pictures of oaks in their prime. You may see one—without looking for it—near a farm-house called Miller-ground—himself a grove. His trunk is clothed in a tunic of moss, which shows the ancient silvan to great advantage—and it would be no easy matter to give him a fall. Should you wish to see Windermere in all her glory, you have but to enter a gate a few yards on this side of his shade, and ascend an eminence called by us Greenbank—but you had as well leave your red mantle in the carriage, for an enormous white, long-horned Lancashire bull has for some years established his head-quarters there, and you would not wish your wife to become a widow, with six fatherless children. But the royal road of poetry is often the most splendid—and by keeping the turnpike, you soon find yourself on a terrace to which there was nothing to compare in the hanging gardens of Babylon. There is the widest breadth of water—the richest foreground of wood—and the most magnificent background of mountains—not only in Westmoreland, but—believe us—in all the world. That blue roof is Calgarth—and no traveller ever pauses on this brow without giving it a blessing—for the sake of the illustrious dead—for there long dwelt in the body of Bishop Watson, the defender of the faith, and there within the shadow of his memory still dwell those dearest on earth to his beatified spirit. So pass along in high and solemn thought, till you lose sight of Calgarth in the lone road that leads by St. Catherines, and then relapse into pleasant fancies and picturesque dreams. This is the best way by far of approaching Troutbeck. No ups and downs in this life were ever more enlivening—not even the ups and downs of a bird learning to fly. Sheep-fences, seven feet high, are admirable contrivances for shutting out scenery; and by shutting out much scenery, why, you confer an unappreciable value on the little that remains visible, and feel as if you could hug it to your heart. But sometimes one does feel

tempted to shove down a few roods of intercepting stone-wall higher than the horse-hair on a cuirassier's casque—though sheep should eat the suckers and scions, protected as they there shoot, at the price of the concealment of the picturesque and the poetical from beauty-searching eyes. That is a long lane, it is said, which has never a turning; so, this must be a short one, which has a hundred. You have turned your back on Windermere—and our advice to you is, to keep your face to the mountains. Troutbeck is a jewel—a diamond of a stream—but bobbin-mills have exhausted some of the most lustrous pools, changing them into shallows, where the minnows rove. Deep dells are his delight—and he loves the rugged scaurs that intrench his wooded banks—and the fantastic rocks that tower-like hang at intervals over his winding course, and seem sometimes to block it up—but the miner works his way out beneath galleries and arches in the living stone—sometimes silent—sometimes singing—and sometimes roaring like thunder—till subsiding into a placid spirit, ere he reaches the wooden-bridge in the bonny holms of Calgarth, he glides graceful as the swan that sometimes sees its image in his breast, and through alder and willow banks murmurs away his life in the lake.

Yes—that is Troutbeck Chapel—one of the smallest—and to our eyes the very simplest—of all the chapels among the hills. Yet will it be remembered when more pretending edifices are forgotten—just like some mild, sensible, but perhaps somewhat too silent person, whose acquaintanceship—nay, friendship—we feel a wish to cultivate—we scarce know why—except that he is mild, sensible, and silent—whereas we would not be civil to the *brusque*, upsetting, and loquacious puppy at his elbow, whose information is as various as it is profound, were one word or look of courtesy to save him from the flames. For heaven's sake, Louisa, don't sketch Troutbeck Chapel! There is nothing but a square tower—a horizontal roof—and some perpendicular walls. The outlines of the mountains here have no specific character. That bridge is but a poor feature—and the stream here very commonplace. Put them not on paper. Yet alive

—is not the secluded scene felt to be most beautiful? It has a soul. The pure spirit of the pastoral age is breathing here—in this utter noiselessness there is the oblivion of all turmoil—and as the bleating of flocks comes on the ear, along the fine air, from the green pastures of the Kentmere range of soft undulating hills, the stilled heart whispers to itself “this is peace.”

The worst of it is, that of all the people that on earth do dwell, your Troutbeck *statesmen* are the most litigious—and most quarrelsome about straws. Not a footpath in all the parish that has not cost a hundred pounds in lawsuits. The most insignificant stile is referred to a full bench of magistrates. That gate was carried to the Quarter Sessions. No branch of a tree can shoot six inches over a march-wall without being indicted for a trespass. And should a frost-loosened stone tumble from some *skrees* down upon a neighbour's field, he will be served with a notice to quit before next morning. Many of the small properties hereabouts have been mortgaged over head and ears to fee rascally attorneys. Yet the last hoop of apples will go to the land-sharks—and the statesman, driven at last from his paternal fields, will sue for something or another *in formâ pauperis*, were it but the worthless wood and secondhand nails that may be destined for his coffin. This is a pretty picture of pastoral life—but we must take pastoral life as we find it. Nor have we any doubt that things were every whit as bad in the times of the Patriarchs—else, whence the satirical sneer, “sham Abraham?” Yonder is the village straggling away up along the hillside, till the farthest house seems a rock fallen with trees from the mountain. The cottages stand for the most part in clusters of twos or threes—with here and there what in Scotland we should call a *clachan*—many a sma' toun within the ae lang toun—but where in aill braid Scotland is a mile-long scattered congregation of rural dwellings, all dropt down where the painter and the poet would have wished to plant them, on knolls, and in dells, and on banks and braes, and below tree-crested rocks, and all bound together in picturesque confusion, by old groves of ash,

oak, and sycamore, and by flower-gardens and fruit-orchards, rich as those of the Hesperides?

If you have no objections—our pretty dears—we shall return to Bowness by Lowood. Let us form a straggling line of march—so that we may one and all indulge in our own silent fancies—and let not a word be spoken—virgins—under the penalty of two kisses for one syllable—till we crown the height above Briary-Close. Why, there it is already—and we hear our musical friend's voice-accompanied guitar. From the front of his cottage, the head and shoulders of Windermere are seen in their most majestic shape—and from nowhere else is the long-withdrawing Langdale so magnificently closed by mountains. There at sunset hangs "Cloudland, Gorgeous-land," to gaze on which for an hour might almost make a Sewell Stokes a poetaster. Who said that Windermere was too narrow? The same critic who thinks the full harvest moon too round—and despises the twinkling of the evening star. It is all the way down—from head to foot—from the Brathay to the Leven—of the proper breadth precisely—to a quarter of an inch. Were the reeds in Poolwyke Bay—on which the birds love to balance themselves—at low or high water, to be visibly longer or shorter than what they have always been in the habit of being on such occasions, since first we brushed them with an oar, when landing in our skiff from the Endeavour, the beauty of the whole of Windermere would be impaired—so exquisitely adapted is that pellucid gleam to the lips of its silvan shores! True, there are flaws in the diamond—but only when the squalls came—and as the blackness sweeps by, that diamond of the first water is again sky-bright and sky-blue, as an angel's eyes. Lowood Bay—we are now embarked in Mr. Jackson's prettiest pinnace—when the sun is westering—which it now is—surpasses all other bays in fresh-water Mediterraneans. Eve loves to see her pensive face reflected in that serenest mirror. To flatter such a divinity is impossible—but sure she never wears a smile so divine as when adjusting her dusky tresses in that truest of all glasses, set in the chastest of

all rich frames. Pleased she retires—with a wavering motion—and casting “many a longing, lingering look behind”—fades indistinctly away among the Brathay woods; while Night, her elder sister, or rather her younger—we really know not which—takes her place at the darkening mirror, till it glitters with her crescent-moon-coronet, wreathed perhaps with a white cloud, and just over the silver bow the lustre of one large yellow star.

As none of the party complain of hunger—let us crack among us a single bottle of our worthy host’s choice old Madeira—and then haste in the barouche (ha! here it is) to Bowness. It is right now to laugh—and sing—and recite poetry—and talk all manner of nonsense. Didn’t ye hear something crack? Can it be a spring—or merely the axletree? Our clerical friend from Chester assures us ’twas but a string of his guitar—so no more shrieking—and after coffee we shall have

“Rise up, rise up, Xarifa, lay your golden cushion down!”

And then we two, my dear sir, must have a contest at chess—at which, if you beat us, we shall leave our bed at midnight, and murder you in your sleep. “But where,” murmurs Matilda, “are we going?” To Oresthead, love,—and Elleray—for you must see a sight these sweet eyes of thine never saw before—a SUNSET.

We have often wondered if there be in the world one woman indisputably and undeniably the most beautiful of all women—or if, indeed, our first mother were “the loveliest of her daughters, Eve.” What human female beauty is all men feel—but few men know—and none can tell—farther than that it is perfect spiritual health, breathingly embodied in perfect corporeal flesh and blood, according to certain god-framed adaptations of form and hue, that, by a familiar, yet inscrutable mystery, to our senses and our souls express sanctity and purity of the immortal essence enshrined within, by aid of all associated perceptions and emotions that the heart and the imagination can agglomerate round them as instantly and as unhesitatingly as the faculties of thought and feeling can

agglomerate round a lily or a rose, for example, the perceptions and emotions that make them—by divine right of inalienable beauty—the royal families of flowers. This definition—or description rather—of human female beauty, may appear to some, as indeed it appears to us—something vague; but all profound truths—out of the exact sciences—are something vague; and it is manifestly the design of a benign and gracious Providence, that they should be so till the end of time—till mortality has put on immortality—and earth is heaven. Vagueness, therefore, is no fault in philosophy—any more than in the dawn of morning, or the gloaming of eve. Enough, if each clause of the sentence that seeks to elucidate a confessed mystery, has a meaning harmonious with all the meanings in all the other clauses—and that the effect of the whole taken together is musical—and a tune. Then it is truth. For all falsehood is dissonant—and verity is concert. It is our faith, that the souls of some women are angelic—or nearly so—by nature and the Christian religion—and that the faces and persons of some women are angelic—or nearly so—whose souls, nevertheless, are seen to be far otherwise—and, on that discovery, beauty fades or dies. But may not soul and body—spirit and matter—meet in perfect union—at birth; and grow together into a creature, though of spiritual mould, “beautiful exceedingly,” as Eve before the Fall? Such a creature—such creatures—may have been—but the question is—did you ever see one? We almost think that we have; but

“She is dedde,
Gone to her death-bedde
All under the willow-tree,”

and it may be that her image in the moonlight of memory and imagination, may be more perfectly beautiful than she herself ever was, when

“Up grew that living flower beneath our eye.”

Yes—’tis thus that we form to ourselves—incommunicably within our souls—what we choose to call ideal beauty—that is, a life-in-death image or eidolon of a being

whose voice was once heard, and whose footsteps once wandered among the flowers of this earth. But it is a mistake to believe that such beauty as this can visit the soul only after the original in which it once breathed is dead. For as it can only be seen by profoundest passion—and the profoundest are the passions of love, and pity, and grief—why may not each and all of these passions—when we consider the constitution of this world and this life—be awakened in their utmost height and depth by the sight of living beauty, as well as by the memory of the dead? To do so is surely within “the reachings of our souls,”—and if so, then may the virgin beauty of his daughter, praying with folded hands and heavenward face when leaning in health on her father’s knees, transcend even the ideal beauty which shall afterwards visit his slumbers nightly, long years after he has laid her head in the grave. If by ideal beauty, you mean a beauty beyond what ever breathed and moved, and had its being on earth—then we suspect that not even “that inner eye which is the bliss of solitude” ever beheld it; but if you merely mean by ideal beauty, that which is composed of ideas, and of the feelings attached by nature to ideas, then begging your pardon, my good sir, all beauty whatever is ideal—and you had better begin to study metaphysics.

But what we were wishing to say is this—that whatever may be the truth with regard to human female beauty—Windermere, seen by sunset from the spot where we now stand, Elleray, is at this moment the most beautiful scene on this earth. The reasons why it must be so are multitudinous. Not only can the eye take in, but the imagination, in its awakened power, can master all the component elements of the spectacle—and while it adequately discerns and sufficiently feels the influence of each, is alive throughout all its essence to the divine agency of the whole. The charm lies in its entirety—its unity, which is so perfect—so seemeth it to our eyes—that ’tis in itself a complete world—of which not a line could be altered without disturbing the spirit of beauty that lies recumbent there, wherever the earth meets the sky. There is nothing here fragmentary; and had a poet

been born, and bred here all his days, nor known aught of fair or grand beyond this liquid vale, yet had he sung truly and profoundly of the shows of nature. No rude and shapeless masses of mountains—such as too often in our own dear Scotland enumber the earth with dreary desolation—with gloom without grandeur—and magnitude without magnificence. But almost in orderly array, and irregular just up to the point of the picturesque, where poetry is not needed for the fancy's pleasure, stand the race of giants—mist-veiled transparently—or crowned with clouds slowly settling of their own accord into all the forms that beauty loves, when with her sister spirit peace she descends at eve from highest heaven to sleep among the shades of earth. Sweet would be the hush of lake, woods, and skies, were it not so solemn! The silence is that of a temple, and, as we face the west, irresistibly are we led to adore. The mighty sun occupies with his flaming retinue all the region. Mighty yet mild—for from his disk awhile insufferably bright, is effused now a gentle crimson light, that dyes all the west in one uniform glory, save where yet round the cloud-edges lingers the purple, the green, and the yellow lustre, unwilling to forsake the violet beds of the sky, changing, while we gaze, into heavenly roses; till that prevailing crimson colour at last gains entire possession of the heavens, and all the previous splendour gives way to one glory, whose paramount purity, lustrous as fire, is in its steadfast beauty sublime. And, lo! the lake has received that sunset into its bosom! It, too, softly burns with a crimson glow—and as sinks the sun below the mountains, Windermere, gorgeous in her array as the western sky, keeps fading away as it fades, till at last all the ineffable splendour expires, and the spirit that has been lost to this world in the transcendent vision, or has been seeing all things appertaining to this world in visionary symbols, returns from that celestial sojourn, and knows that its lot is, henceforth as heretofore, to walk weariedly, perhaps, and woe-begone, over the no longer divine but disenchanted earth!

It is very kind in the moon and stars—just like them—to rise so soon after sunset. The heart sinks at the sight of the sky, when a characterless night succeeds such a

blaze of light—like dull reality dashing the last vestiges of the brightest of dreams. When the moon is “hid in her vacant interlunar cave,” and not a star can “burst its cerements,” in the dim blank imagination droops her wings—our thoughts become of the earth earthy—and poetry seems a pastime fit but for fools and children. But how different our mood, when

“Glow the firmament with living sapphire!”

and Diana, who has ascended high in heaven, without our having ever once observed the divinity, bends her silver bow among the rejoicing stars, while the lake, like another sky, seems to contain its own luminaries, a different division of the constellated night! 'Tis merry Windermere no more! Yet we must not call her melancholy—though somewhat sad she seems, and pensive, as if the stillness of universal nature did touch her heart. How serene all the lights—how peaceful all the shadows! Steadfast alike—as if there they would brood for ever—yet transient as all loveliness—and at the mercy of every cloud! In some places, the lake has disappeared—in others the moonlight is almost like sunshine—only silver instead of gold! Here spots of quiet light—there lines of trembling lustre—and there a flood of radiance chequered by the images of trees! Lo! the isle called Beautiful has now gathered upon its central grove all the radiance issuing from that celestial urn! And almost in another moment it seems blended with the dim mass of mainland, and blackness enshrouds the woods. Still as seems the night to unobservant eyes, it is fluctuating in its expression as the face of a sleeper overspread with pleasant but disturbing dreams. Never for any two successive moments is the aspect of the night the same—each smile has its own meaning, its own character—and light is felt to be like music, to have a melody and a harmony of its own—so mysteriously allied are the powers and provinces of eye and ear, and by such a kindred and congenial agency do they administer to the workings of the spirit.

Well, that is very extraordinary—Rain—rain—rain!
All the eyes of heaven were bright as bright might be—

the sky was blue as violets—that braided whiteness, that here and there floated like a veil on the brow of night, was all that recalled the memory of clouds—and as for the moon, no faintest halo yellowed round her orb that seemed indeed “one perfect chrysolite;”—yet while all the winds seemed laid asleep till morn, and beauty to have chained all the elements into peace—overcast in a moment is the firmament—an evanishing has left it blank as mist—there is a fast, thick, pattering on the woods—yes—rain—rain—rain—and ere we reach Bowness, the party will be wet through to their skins. Nay—matters are getting still more serious—for there was lightning—lightning! Ten seconds! and hark, very respectable thunder! With all our wisdom, we have not been weatherwise—or we should^o have known—when we saw it—an electrical sunset. Only look now towards the west. There floats Noah’s Ark—a magnificent spectacle and now for the flood. That far-off sullen sound is the sound of cataracts. And what may mean that sighing and moaning, and muttering up among the cliffs? See—see how the sheet lightning shows the long lake-shore all tumbling with foamy breakers. A strong wind is there—but here there is not a breath. But the woods across the lake are bowing their heads to the blast. Windermere is in a tumult—the storm comes flying on wings all abroad—and now we are in the very heart of the hurricane. See in Bowness is hurrying many a light—for the people fear we may be on the lake—and Billy, depend on’t, is launching his lifeboat to go to our assistance. Well, this is an adventure.—But soft—what ails our argand lamp! Our study is in such darkness, that we cannot see our paper—and therefore in the midst of a thunderstorm we conclude our article.

GENIUS.

(Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, 1830.)

* * * * *

Now, we are no philosopher at all, although we are about to philosophize; but we should never take up a pen, or a gun, or a jug again, did we not humbly, but firmly, believe that Christopher North—and many thousand other people flourishing in shade or sunshine—knows ten, twenty, fifty times as much and more of the human mind, and all its inward concerns, than Sir James Mackintosh. The general haziness and wateriness of all his disquisitions show that he is—if not absolutely shallow—far, far indeed from being profound; but that he cannot be himself, in any sense however limited, a great writer, let one sentence prove—one sentence of portentous folly. “The admirable writer whose language has occasioned this illustration, who *at an early age* HAS MASTERED EVERY SPECIES OF COMPOSITION, will doubtless hold fast to simplicity, which survives all the fashions of deviation from it, and which a man *of a genius so fertile* has few temptations to forsake.” Of whom does Sir James here speak? *Credite, posteri*, THOMAS BABINGTON M'AULEY! Here is a man who has taken upon himself the task, which the entire tone of his treatise informs us that, in his own opinion, he has successfully performed, of appreciating justly and finely the powers and productions of all moral philosophers in all ages; and who has either the stupidity to think, or the effrontery to say it without thinking it, unblushing and brazen both, that a clever lad or boy, who but a year or two ago began to shave his chin, and who has not even attempted any

kind of composition at all, but a prize poem, neither better nor worse than prize poems generally are—that is groaningly stupid—and a few flashy and frothy, but neither uneloquent nor uningenious articles in the *Edinburgh Review*—such as his critiques on Milton, Dante, and Machiavelli—has MASTERED EVERY SPECIES OF COMPOSITION! Well might such a judge of “every species of composition” disparage and undervalue the metaphysical genius and achievements of Dr. Thomas Brown! One such insane sentence vitiates all his judgment on all matters either of philosophy or of common sense; and proves him either to be utterly destitute of all true discernment, or capable of sacrificing his regard to truth, and decency, and reputation, to the whim and caprice of a childish friendship. Does it not?

Sir James, somewhere or other, touches on the connexion between Genius and Virtue—and as we have often required of ourselves a comparison between these divinities, we glowered on his page with all our faculties of soul and sense, but could see nothing. Sir James had to draw upon his own stores for any thing he might say on that subject, for none of the wise-men or wiseacres who are among the number of his familiars, have, we believe, more than touched it—but the meanness and misery of his lean lucubrations, betray the scantiness and bareness of the pastures on which they have been fed. It is always so with Sir James. He has built some large haystacks, and filled some large barns with wheat-sheaves, but all the provender and victual has been bought or borrowed; and on walking through his farm, we are pained to see the state both of meadow and arable—the one brown in spite of much irrigation, and the other in vain all lying in summer-fallow; nor can we hope, that in any future autumn it will ever produce a crop.

Now let us do for Sir James what Sir James would not, because he could not, do for us, and other Scotch ignoramuses, who know nothing of the human mind. Let us at least give him a few hints; nor let him refuse to hear them, though, unlike that fortunate youth, Mr. Thomas Babington M'Auley, so far from having—even in our old age—“mastered every species of composition,”

we have not the skill even of a journeyman in any, and but in one the power of an apprentice.

Now, without attempting in this sheepfold to define either genius or virtue, allow us here to just jot down a few memoranda. Genius and virtue are felt—by us at least at this moment—to be founded in the capacity, experience, and desire of happiness.

Genius is of as many kinds as the human intellectual powers have modes of exertion and application—differing either by the internal and metaphysical constitution of its action, or by its matter external to the spirit. Let us then compare genius, for a few moments, in respect, first, of its universal, and, secondly, of its particular conditions, with virtue. If we utter nonsense, there is no harm done, for we are bothering nobody in the sheepfold—and should Gurney extend these our shorthand notes, and Ebony, in our absence, admit this part of our article into *Maga*, let all readers skip the pages if they please till we get into *Gleno*.

First, then, virtue produces pleasure. Now, we consider happiness as a sum of durable pleasures. Pleasures are the items and moments of happiness to the individual mind, by which it is exerted, consonant with, and causing, the pleasure of other minds. In like manner does not genius produce pleasure to the individual mind in which it acts, consonant with and causing the pleasure of other minds? It does. So far the comparison holds good.

How far do they resemble each other in their origin? Virtue is born of pleasure and pain. For it arises, according to our sacred belief, first out of consciousness of certain capacities of pleasures—perhaps rather out of consciousnesses of all the capacities of pleasure which were awakened by, or consisted in, so many experiences of pleasure. Soon there ensues a comparison of one kind of pleasure with another, out of which grows preference of the *more durable*. Also there ensues, perhaps not wholly upon this comparison, but in some mysterious way we know not, a preferring surrender of sensibility and desire to certain modes of pleasure, which appear, in the result, to have been those most agreeing with the happiness of others; *e. g.* to the *pleasure of loving others*.

Now—know all men—or no men—that to us here, sitting in this sheepfold, in a cove belonging to Glen-Etive, and commanding more than a glimpse of the Loch, a league-long gleam, this preferring of the preferable pleasures seems to be—VIRTUE. So much for its connexion with pleasure. Pain, again, enters into virtue very variously. There are pains which it is virtuous to avoid; *e. g.* the pain of self-reproach. There is pain out of which it is virtuous, by enduring it, to draw pleasure; *e. g.* it is virtuous to derive pleasure from the patient endurance of bodily pain—be it the *tic douloureux*—cancer—stone—or gout. It will, we think, be found that the direct and proper effect of pain, acting in either way upon virtue, that is, shunned by it, or taken in and made part of it, especially in the latter way, is to invigorate virtue. Pleasure produces—pain confirms and strengthens.

Now turn to genius. It too, we say, is born of pleasure and pain—of pleasure let into the mind in ways innumerable and unspeakable. Are they all intellectual? It shall hardly be said so; but still pleasures which intellect seizes, acknowledges, and appropriates. Some pleasures there are, originally intellectual. Thus the pleasure of the synthesis and analysis of numbers is such; sometimes so early evinced, as to point to an original constitutional determination, and resulting in genius, which, facile and narrow as its materials, elementarily received, appear, yet in powerful minds, is acknowledged as of a high order. The elementary pleasures, again, of colour and sound, appear to us rather to be bodily than intellectual; though it is striking and puzzling that the pleasure of harmony in sound, is the pleasure of a relation of agreement,—who will tell how felt or discerned? You see then, gentle reader, that the boundaries between the properly intellectual and properly sensible elements employed by genius, are hard to draw. The question at present with us—here in this sheepfold—is, how do these pleasures act in evolving genius? What are they to it?

Now it is easily credible, as a general position, that pleasure may serve to excite the intellectual faculties into activity—but we want something more definite. Let us say, then, that when pleasure has been felt from a par-

ticular exertion of the purely intellectual faculties, as from the composition and resolution of numbers, the experience of that pleasure becomes a sufficient motive to the mind to reacquire it, by repeating the action. But further, let us say that the repetition of the action, for the sake of the pleasure, may be either reflective and designed, and distinctly voluntary; or it may be in so small a degree reflective and designed, as scarcely to seem voluntary. The last is—and if ever it could be wholly involuntary, that most of all would be—in our belief—the repetition proper to genius. The mind is attracted—beguiled—won—falls into the action involuntarily and in pure delight.

But farther—whence is this pure delight? Seems it should be, either adventitious or essential. Thus, the pleasure of praise, self-esteem, and so on, obtained by an intellectual exertion, is adventitious, and belongs particularly, as an incentive, to that intellectual activity and force, which is not genius. But the direct, instantaneous, and unreflective pleasure, which springs in the sudden intuition of a relation,—for instance, according to the different strength of the mind, of parallel lines being prolonged for ever without approaching or diverging,—of the containing by a definition, of the subject of a definition,—of the congruity of a metaphor with the thought to be signified,—is essential. Pleasure of pride may be an adjunct to the pleasure of the intuition, but is not essential. Now the essential pleasure, we hold, pertains to genius—and is of its essence. Whence, then does it come?

Why have some minds one essential intellectual pleasure, and some another? This distinction of pleasures must be connected with another distinction—viz. of aptitude (see *Phrenology*) in one mind to discern one class of relations,—in another, another. But does the aptitude induce the pleasure, or the pleasure the aptitude? Doubtless, each induces each in some measure; but sitting here in this sheepfold, we feel assured that there must be a native aptitude to begin with. Let us say, then, that any discernment of relation is a natural source of pleasure, provided it be a quick, active, facile, clear,

sure discernment. Then, according to some determination in the intellectual powers given, one mind has this pleasure of discernment as to one class of relations, and another, as to another. And this, we cannot hesitate to say, is the first constituent of difference of genius from genius,—this difference, as it would appear, in the simply intellectual power, and in its very essence. A second, it would appear, is this. The mind is complex. It has a thousand sources of pleasure—all native. So that two minds, having all the thousand sources, the three hundred sources which are much the strongest in one, shall be quite another three hundred from the three hundred which are much the strongest in the other. Take, then, a mind with its characteristic strongest sources. It also has certain distinct intellectual endowments, or discernings of its own. These endowments are among those strongest sources: but are a few of them. Now, see how some of the other sources of pleasure shall work into the action of those intellectual powers, and how this also shall be—Genius! For example, you have the gift of tune, and your flow of feeling is melancholy. If that be not your case—it is ours. Your genius of music—ours at least—shall therefore be tender. Thus have we obtained something of a constitution of genius. Doubt there can be none that education helps to make genius, just as it has a power of destroying it.

Now, having got thus far, let us not speak of that characteristic of the action of genius, its tendency to conform its materials to its own thought and will—but let us say a few words of the *happiness* of genius. As it arises out of, so it produces, pleasure—the same pleasure “doubled and redoubled.” It is an endless multiplication, by self-evolution of pleasure. Compare this with the moral will—and then we come to know something of the comparison of virtue and genius—the subject which we have all along been philosophizing upon here in the sheep-fold. Are not both powers of happiness drawn from the sensibility to pleasure, to pain—in other words, from the capacity of happiness excited and exerted? We have neglected to speak of the influence of pain on genius, but it speaks for itself. It deepens, sharpens, strengthens,

lightens through genius, and instructs it in existence. Alas! it cannot be said that there is not will in genius. It is most wilful—though, had we time—which we have not—for we must in a few minutes be up and away—we think we could show that there is always a personal respect of some sort in that will which is moral or immoral, opposed to an impersonality of genius. But here is a more distinct difference, which may be shown in two sentences. Moral states of will are states tending, upon *the whole of the mind*, to produce happiness. The states of genius are states tending, upon *a part of the mind*, to produce it. Moral states do not, by the constitution of the world, necessarily produce happiness—that is, as the world goes—having been constituted capable of disorder, and being disordered. But moral states, by the constitution of the mind only, if there were no external counteraction, do necessarily produce happiness. On the contrary, genius, by the constitution of the mind only, does not necessarily produce happiness; but within the mind may be opposed to happiness, may be opposed to morality, may be opposed to the health of the faculties, and therefore, in effect opposed to itself. There is then in genius that for which we love it—there is a claim in it on our love, similar to the claim of morality; and we can perceive that our feelings towards them are analogous.

But there is in genius cause also, why comparing it with, we should place it under, morality, as something less divine. What, then, is that disposition which we sometimes find, and to which many yield, to hold equal genius with morality? Whenever this is done by a clearly and profoundly understanding mind, it is when we see morality—not coming from its source in the sacred mountains—not from love, its sole divine source—but from some lower spring. Thus we can conceive fear in certain obvious, and in some deeper measures, as a moral principle of conduct, and yet merely fear of human, either civil or simply social law, or of eternal consequences. This is policy, and not, in the highest sense, morality. It is conduct deliberately fitted to second ends to be avoided or attained. Yet as conduct, by its face

to the world, it is morality. There must be an analogous imperfect morality of mind, as well as of conduct—an integrity of desire, of will, almost of affection, which nevertheless dissatisfies our judgment and feeling; for the causes are not those which we prefer, but some distinct calculating fears, and these alone. Thus the appetites are laid under the laws of natural and religious sanction. They injure health—they incur far-future torments, penal fire. If, on these grounds, indulging or denying them, so far my conduct is moral, of the kind aforesaid. But with the drawing back in conduct, is there not engendered a shrinking in the moral mind, an abhorrence? For the very appetite itself, the will, the thought, is feared, as inducing that abhorrence. There is restraint inward, of the mind itself, engendered of fear, without which the state of the will is not regarded by us with love. Now, does not all this prove, and also show, how there may arise a moral will less agreeable to us—and justly so, when feeling finely and thinking profoundly—than genius, in its better and higher working, in which love, though it were but a love of suns and woods, and stars and waters, predominates? Observe, too, that in the love of nature—bear witness, O ye mountains, and thou, O Loch-Etive, as now beheld by us from this wild and lone sheepfold! there always breathes some inspiration of other mightier love towards the Being who created the beauty or the magnificence on which we gaze, and gave us souls to see and to enjoy it. Finally, it will, we think, always be found that that moral will which we regard with less satisfaction, relates to definite objects, as to theft or murder, or such or such a vice. But the moral will which we unreservedly approve, relates to nothing definite; it is an undefined power, universally applicable, applying itself instantaneously and intuitively to the object presented, and acknowledging or rejecting it by its discernings and intimations of the very moment.

We feel, that, were we to say a tithe of what we have got to say on this subject, we should sit here in this sheepfold all day, and lose one of the best days for sport on the moors that ever blew from the skies. Therefore, a very few sentences more.

Observe, that various states of the soul are in themselves so excellent—and so ready for the reception of virtue—such, for example, as self-command, patience, and steadfastness of purpose—that to the imagination, which conceives not merely what is, but what is possible to be, which can hardly represent to itself the soul so full of powers, without supposition, at the same time, of their noble application, these very powers themselves receive a part of that esteem which is due to them only when they are applied in the service of virtue. Now, may we not, without violence, extend the spirit of this remark to those intellectual powers and dispositions which we are always accustomed to contemplate with a feeling resembling that of moral approbation? They belong to the highest state of the soul; to the exaltation of that spirit, of which the highest exaltation is virtue. How much of that nature, which is indeed moral, must be unfolded in him, in whom either the creative or meditative powers of the mind have attained to great perfection! They are not, strictly speaking, moral indeed; for they may exist apart from all morality. But they have prepared so many faculties of the whole being to be in harmony with virtue, that we can scarcely regard them without something of the reverence which is justifiable only towards virtue itself.

In respect, then, to these and other similar qualities, there is always one feeling prevalent in the mind. We regard the soul in the excellence of all its highest powers, as that object to which our moral reverence and love are due. But none of its nobler powers can appear to us in great strength, without giving intimation to our thoughts of something beyond what appears to us. That ennobled state of one power appears connected with the ennobled state of the whole being to which it belongs; and our forward admiration awakes to excellence which is dimly apprehended, but not manifested to our eyes.

Is it not in this way, we ask you, that we look upon the highest genius, imaginative or meditative, as kindred to the highest virtue? When we think of Newton in the silence of midnight reading the radiant records of creative wisdom in the sky, and with something of a seraph's soul, enjoying a delight known but to intellect alone, we can-

not but transfer the admiring thoughts with which we have regarded the contemplative philosopher, to what we feel to be the virtue and piety of the man. It is the will of God for which he is searching among the stars of heaven. In the laws which guide those orbs along in their silent beauty, he feels still the presence of the one Great Spirit; so that with the name of Newton are not only associated ideas of vastness and sublimity in our imagination, but thoughts of divine love and mercy in our hearts. Thus every thing low and earthly is dis-severed from that majestic name. It rises before us pure and beautiful as a planet; and we may be almost said to feel our own immortality in the magnificent power bestowed by the Deity upon a child of dust.

So, too, when we think on the highest triumphs of imaginative genius, and see it soaring on its unwearied wings through the stainless ether. The innocence of a yet unfallen spirit, and the bliss of its yet unfaded bowers, as breathed upon us in the song of Milton, seems to consecrate to us that great poet's heart; and we feel the kindred nature of the intellectual and moral spirit of genius and virtue when shown by his sacred power the image of a sinless world, or, mixed with human, celestial shapes,

“Crowning the glorious hosts of Paradise.”

Well, there is indeed an exquisite bit of still life! Had we been haranguing *rivâ voce*, instead of *currente calamo*, we should have attributed to our oral eloquence that trance of profound repose. Often has it been our lot, by our conversational powers, to set the table on a snore! The more stirring the theme, the more soporific the sound of our silver voice. Why, the very day after the great public meeting of the citizens of Edinburgh, called by our most gracious Lord Provost, at the requisition of a hundred men, as he wittily said, of all parties—that is to say, ninety-seven Whigs, two Tories tottering on the threshold of Liberalism, and one nondescript, who, by the coarse insults he brutally heaped on “that gray discrowned head,” proved that he was of the class of the king-killers

—the very night, we say, after that spirit-stirring, soul-rousing, man-ennobling assemblage of all most patriotic in the land we live in, did we, in our own house, descant with such overwhelming eloquence on the new French Revolution, as to set the whole audience, men, women, and children, asleep over their tumblers—all except one of the aforesaid Whigs, and one of the aforesaid tottering Tories; and they had the very narrowest escape we ever witnessed, from what might have been a most melancholy accident. For, at the close of a most complicated paragraph about Prince Polignac, the one fell backwards, chair and all, with a tremendous crash on the floor, and the other fell away forwards, chair and all, on the table, to the destruction of much crystal, and the imminent danger of the great jug. Never was there such a revolution!—But look there! In a small spot of stationary sunshine—while we have been scribbling in the shade of the sheep-fold—lie Hamish, and Surefoot the shelty, O'Bronte, and Ponto, and Piro, and Basta, all sound asleep! Such has been the power of the breath even of our written metaphysics! If ever they be printed, we pity the poor public. Ourselves even are beginning to be comatose. Dogs are troubled dreamers—but these four are like the dreamless dead. Horses, too, seem often to be witch-ridden in their sleep. But at this moment Surefoot is stretched more like a stone than a shelty in the land of Nod. As for Hamish, were he to lie so braxy-like by himself on the hill, he would be awakened by the bill of the raven digging into his sockets. We are Morpheus and Orpheus in one incarnation—the very pink of poppy—the true spirit of opium, and of laudanum the concentrated essence.

THE SEASONS.

(Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, 1830.)

THANK Heaven! Summer and Autumn are both dead and buried at last, and white lie the snow on their graves! Youth is the season of all sorts of insolence, and therefore we can forgive and forget almost any thing in Spring. He has always been a privileged personage; and we have no doubt that he played his pranks even in Paradise. To-day, he meets you unexpectedly on the hill-side; and was there ever a face in this world so celestialized by smiles? All the features are framed of light. Black eyes are beads—blue eyes are diamonds. Gaze, then, into the blue eyes of Spring, and you feel that in the untroubled lustre, there is something more sublime than in the heights of the cloudless heavens, or in the depths of the waveless seas. More sublime because essentially spiritual. There stands the young Angel, entranced, in the conscious mystery of his own beautiful and blessed being; and the earth which we mortal creatures tread, becomes all at once fit region for the sojourn of the immortal son of the morning. So might some great painter image the first-born of the year, till nations adored the picture. To-morrow you repair, with hermit steps, to the mount of the vision, and,

“Fierce as ten furies, terrible as hell,”

Spring clutches you by the hair, with the fingers of frost; blashes a storm of sleet in your face, and finishes, perhaps, by folding you in a winding-sheet of snow, in which you would infallibly perish but for a pocket-pistol of

Glenlivet. The day after to-morrow, you behold him—Spring—walking along the firmament, sad but not sullen—mournful, but not miserable—disturbed but not despairing—now coming out towards you in a burst of light—and now fading away from you in a gathering of gloom—even as one might figure in his imagination, a fallen angel. On Thursday, confound you if you know what the devil to make of his Springship. There he is, stripped to the buff—playing at hide-and-seek, hare-and-hound, with a queer crazy crony of his in a fur-cap, swandown waistcoat, and hairy breeches, Lodbrog or Winter. You turn up the whites of your eyes, and the browns of your hands in amazement, till the two, by way of change of pastime, cease their mutual vagaries, and, like a couple of hawks diverting themselves with an owl, in conclusion buffet you off the premises. You insert the occurrence, with suitable reflections, in your Meteorological Diary, under the head—Spring. On Friday, nothing is seen of you but the blue tip of your nose, for you are confined to bed by rheumatism, and nobody admitted to your sleepless sanctum but your condoling Mawsey. 'Tis a pity. For—never since the flood-greened earth, on her first resurrection-morn, laughed around Ararat, spanned was she by such a rainbow! By all that is various and vanishing, the arch seems many miles broad, and many, many miles high, and all creation to be gladly and gloriously gathered together—without being crowded—plains, woods, villages, towns, hills, and clouds, beneath the pathway of Spring, once more an angel—an unfallen angel! While the tinge that trembles into transcendent hues—fading and fluctuating—deepening and dying—now gone, as if for ever—and now back again in an instant, as if breathing and alive—is felt, during all that wavering visitation, to be of all sights the most evanescent, and yet inspirative of a beauty-born belief, bright as the sun that flung the image on the cloud,—profound as the gloom it illumines—that it shone and is shining there at the bidding of Him who inhabiteth eternity. The grim noon of Saturday, after a moaning morning, and one silent intermediate lour of gravelike stillness, begins to

gleam fitfully with lightning like a maniac's eye; and list! is not that

"The sound
Of thunder heard remote!"

On earth wind there is none—not so much as a breath. But there is a strong wind in heaven—for see how that huge cloud-city, a night within a day, comes moving on along the hidden mountain-tops, and hangs over the loch all at once black as pitch, except that here and there a sort of sullen purple heaves upon the long slow swell, and here and there along the shores—how caused we know not—are seen, but heard not, the white melancholy breakers! Is no one smitten blind? No! thank God! But here the thanksgiving has been worded, an airquake has split asunder the cloud-city, the night within the day, and all its towers and temples are disordered along the firmament, to a sound than might waken the dead. Where are ye, ye echo-hunters, that grudge not to purchase gunpowder explosions on Lowood bowling-green, at four shillings the blast? See! there are our artillerymen stalking from battery to battery—all hung up aloft facing the west—or “each standing by his gun,” with lighted match moving or motionless, shadows-figures, and all clothed in black-blue uniform, with blood-red facings, portentously glancing in the sun, as he strives to struggle into heaven. The generalissimo of all the forces, who is he but—Spring?—Hand in hand with Spring, Sabbath descends from heaven unto earth; and are not their feet beautiful on the mountains? Small as is the voice of that tinkling bell from that humble spire, overtopped by its coeval trees, yet is it heard in the heart of infinitude. So is the bleating of these silly sheep on the braes—and so is that voice of psalms, all at once rising so spirit-like, as if the very kirk were animated, and sang a joyous song in the wilderness to the ear of the Most High. For all things are under his care—those that, as we dream, have no life—the flowers and the herbs, and the trees,—those that some dim scripture seems to say, when they die, utterly perish—and those that all bright

scripture, whether written in the book of God, or the book of Nature, declares will live for ever!

If such be the character of Spring, gentle reader, wilt thou not forget and forgive—with us—much occasional conduct on his part that appears not only inexplicable, but incomprehensible! But we cannot extend the same indulgence to Summer and to Autumn. Summer is a season come to the years of discretion, and ought to conduct himself like a staid, sober, sensible, middle-aged man, not past, but passing, his prime. Now, Summer, we are sorry to say it, has lately behaved in a way to make his best friends ashamed of him—in a way absolutely disgraceful to a person of his time of life. Having picked a quarrel with the Sun—his benefactor—nay his father, what else could he expect but that that enlightened Christian would altogether withhold his countenance from so undutiful and ungrateful a child, and leave him to travel along the mire and beneath the clouds? For some weeks Summer was sulky—and sullenly scorned to shed a tear. His eyes were like ice. By and by, like a great school-boy, he began to whine and whimper—and when he found that that would not do, he blubbered like the booby of the lowest form. Still the Sun would not look on him—or if he did, 'twas with a sudden and short half-smile, half-sowl, that froze the ingrate's blood. At last the Summer grew contrite, and the Sun forgiving; the one burst out into a flood of tears, the other into a flood of light. In simple words, the Summer wept and the Sun smiled—and for one broken month there was a perpetual alternation of rain and radiance. How beautiful is penitence! How beautiful forgiveness! For one week the Summer was restored to his pristine peace and old luxuriance, and the desert blossomed like the rose.

Therefore we ask the Summer's pardon for thanking heaven that he is dead. Would that he were alive again, and buried not for ever beneath the yellow forest leaves! O thou first, faint, fair, fine tinge of dawning light, that streaks the still-sleeping yet just-waking face of the morn, light and no light, a shadowy something that as we gaze is felt to be growing into an emotion that must be either innocence or beauty, or both blending together

into devotion before deity, once more duly visible in the divine colouring that forebodes another day to mortal life,—before thee what holy bliss to kneel upon the greensward in some forest glade, while every leaf is a tremble with dewdrops, and the happy little birds are beginning to twitter, yet motionless among the boughs, —before thee to kneel as at a shrine, and breathe deeper and deeper,—as the lustre waxeth purer and purer, brighter and more bright, till range after range arise of crimson clouds in altitude sublime, and breast above breast expands of yellow woods softly glittering in their far-spread magnificence,—then what holy bliss to breathe deeper and deeper unto Him who holds in the hollow of his hand the heavens and the earth, our high but most humble orisons! But now it is day, and broad-awake seems the whole joyful world. The clouds—lustrous no more—are all anchored on the sky, white as fleets waiting for the wind. Time is not felt—and one might dream that the day was to endure for ever. Yet lo! that great river rolls on in the light—and why will he leave those lovely inland woods for the naked shores! Why—why, responds some voice—hurry we on our own lives—impetuous and passionate far more than he with all his cataracts—as if anxious to forsake the regions of the upper day for the dim place from which we yet recoil in fear—the dim place which imagination sometimes seems to see, even through the sunshine, beyond the bourne of this our unintelligible being, stretching sea-like into a still more mysterious night! Long as a midsummer day is, it has gone by like a heron's flight. Lo! the sun is setting! —and let him set out without being scribbled upon by Christopher North. We took a pen-and-ink sketch of him in a “Day on Windermere.” Poor nature is much to be pitied among painters and poets. They are perpetually falling into

“Such perusal of her face
As they would draw it,”

and often must she be sick of the curious impertinents. But a curious impertinent are not we—if ever there was

one beneath the skies—a devout worshipper of Nature; and though we often seem to heed not her shrine—it stands in our imagination, like a temple in a perpetual Sabbath.

It was poetically and piously said by the Ettrick Shepherd, in last month's *Noctes*, that there was no such thing in nature as bad weather. Take last summer, which we began this article by abusing in good set terms. Its weather was broken, but not bad; and much various beauty and sublimity is involved in the epithet "broken," when applied to "the season of the year." Commonplace people, especially town-dwellers, who *flit* into the country for a few months, have a silly and absurd idea of summer, which all the atmospherical phenomena fail to drive out of their foolish fancies. They insist on its remaining with us for half a year at least, and on its being dressed in its Sunday's best every day in the week, as long as they continue in country quarters. The sun must rise, like a labourer, at the very earliest hour, shine all day, and go to bed late, else they treat him contumeliously, and declare that he is not worth his meat. Should he retire occasionally behind a cloud, which it seems most natural and reasonable for one to do who lives so much in the public eye, why a whole watering-place, uplifting a face of dissatisfied expostulation to heaven, exclaims, "Where is the sun? Are we never to have any sun?" They also insist that there shall be no rain of more than an hour's duration in the daytime, but that it shall all fall by night. Yet, when the sun does exert himself, as if at their bidding, and is shining, as he supposes, to their heart's content, up go a hundred green parasols in his face, enough to startle the celestial steeds in his chariot, while a hundred voices

"Cry, d—n it, how hot we shall be!"

A *broken* summer for our senses and our soul! Now and then a few continuous days—perhaps a whole week—but, if that be denied, now and then,

"Like angel visits, few and far between,"

a single day—blue-spread over heaven, green-spread over earth—no cloud above, no shade below, save that dove-coloured marble lying motionless like the mansions of peace, and that pensive gloom that falls from some old castle or venerable wood—the stillness of a sleeping joy, to our heart profounder than that of death, in the air, in the sky, and resting on our mighty mother's undisturbed breast—no lowing on the hills, no bleating on braes—the rivers almost silent as lochs, and the lochs, just visible in their aerial purity, floating dreamlike between earth and sky, embued with the beauty of both, and seeming to belong to either, as the heart melts to human tenderness, or beyond all mortal loves the imagination soars! Such days seem now to us—as memory and imagination half restore and half create the past into such weather as may have shone over the bridal morn of our first parents in Paradise—to have been frequent—nay, to have lasted all the summer long—when our boyhood was bright from the hands of God. Each of those days was in itself a life! Yet all those sunny lives melted into one summer and all those summers formed one continuous bliss. Storms and snows vanished out of our ideal year; and then, morning, noon, and night, wherever we breathed, we *felt*, what now we but *know*, the inmost meaning of that profound verse of Virgil the divine—

“Devenere locos lætos, et amœna vireta
Fortunatorum nemorum, sedesque beatas.
Largior hic campos æther et lumine vestit
Purpureo; solumque suum, sua sidera norunt.”

Few—no such days as those seem now ever to be born. Sometimes we indeed gaze through the face into the heart of the sky, and for a moment feel that the ancient glory of the heavens has returned on our dream of life. But to the perfect beatitude of the skies, there comes from the soul within us a mournful response, that betokens some wide and deep—some everlasting change. Joy is not now what joy was of yore; like a fine diamond with a flaw is now imagination's eye; other motes than those that float through ether cross between its orb and the sun; the “fine gold has become dim,” with which

morning and evening of old embossed the skies ; the dew-drops are not now the pearlins once they were, left on

“ Flowers, and weeds as beautiful as flowers,”

by angels’ and by fairies’ wings ; knowledge, custom, experience, fate, fortune, error, vice, and sin, have dulled, and darkened, and deadened

“ All the mysterious world of eye and ear,”

and the soul, unable to bring over the present the ineffable bliss and beauty of the past, almost faints

“ As coming events cast their shadows before,”

to think what a ghastly thundergloom may, by Providence, be reserved for the future !

Yet think not, gentle reader, that things are altogether so bad with us as this strain—sincere though it be as a stream from the sacred mountains—might seem to declare. We can yet enjoy a *broken* summer. It would do your heart good to see us hobbling with our crutch along the Highland hills, sans greatcoat or umbrella, in a summer shower, aiblins cap in hand that our hair may grow, up to the knees in the bonny blooming heather, or clambering, like an old goat, among the cliffs. Nothing so good for gout or rheumatism as to get wet through, while the thermometer keeps ranging between 60° and 70°, three times a-day. What refreshment in the very sound—Soaking ! Old bones wax dry—nerves numb—sinews stiff—flesh frail—and there is a sad drawback on the Whole Duty of Man. But a sweet, soft, sou’wester blows “ caller” on our craziness, and all our pores instinctively open their mouths at the approach of rain. Oh ! look but at those dozen downward showers, all denizens of heaven, how black, and blue, and bright they in their glee are streaming, and gleaming athwart the sunny mountain-gloom, while ever as they descend on earth, lift up the streams along the wilderness louder and louder a choral song ! Look now at the heather—and smile

whenever henceforth you hear people talk of *purple*. You have been wont to call a gold guinea or a sovereign *yellow*—but if you have got one in your pocket, place it on your palm and in the light of that broom, is it not a *dirty brown*? You have read Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner," and remember the lines,

" While ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald."

Nay, you have an emerald ring on your finger—but how gray it looks beside the *green* of those brackens, that pasture, that wood! Purple, yellow, and green, you have now seen, sir, for the first time in your life. Widening and widening over your head, all the while you have been gazing on the beather, the broom, the bracken, the pastures, and the woods, have the eternal heavens been preparing for you a vision of the sacred *blue*. Is not that an indigo divine? Or, if you scorn that mercantile and manufacturing image, steal that blue from the sky, and let the lady of your love tinge but her eyelids with one touch, and a saintlier beauty will be in her upward looks as she beseeches heaven to bless thee in her prayers! Set slowly—slowly—slowly—O sun of suns! as may be allowed by the laws of Nature. For not long after thou hast sunk behind those mountains into the sea, will that celestial ROSY-RED be tabernacled in the heavens!

Meanwhile, three of the dozen showers have so soaked and steeped our old crazy carcass in refreshment, and restoration, and renewal of youth, that we should not be surprised were we to outlive that raven croaking in pure *gaieté du cœur* on the cliff. Threescore and ten years! Poo—'tis a pitiful span. At a hundred we shall ent capers—for twenty years more keep to the Highland fling,—and at the close of other twenty, jig it into the grave to that matchless strathspey, the Reel o' Tullochgorum!

Having thus made our peace with last summer, can we allow the sun to go down on our wrath towards the autumn, whose back we yet see on the horizon, before he turn about to bow adieu to our hemisphere? Hollo! meet us half-way in yonder immense field of potatoes, our worthy Season, and among these peace-makers, the

Mealies and the Waxies, shall we two smoke together the camulet or cigar of reconciliation. The floods fell, and the folk feared famine. The people whined over the smut in wheat, and pored pale on the monthly agricultural report. Grain grew greener and greener—reapers stood at the crosses of villages, towns, and cities, passing from one to another comfortless quechs o' sma' yill, with their straw-bound sickles hanging idle across their shoulders, and with unhired-looking faces, as ragged a company as if you were to dream of a symposium of scarecrows. Alarmed imagination beheld harvest treading on the heels of Christmas,

“And Britain sadden'd at the long delay!”

When, whew! to dash the dismal predictions of foolish and false prophets, came rustling from all the airts, far and wide over the rain-drenched kingdom, the great armament of the autumnal winds! Groaned the grain, as in sudden resurrection it lifted up its head, and knew that again the sun was in heaven. Death became life; and the hearts of the husbandmen sang aloud for joy. Like Turks the reapers brandished their siekles in the breezy light, and every field glittered with Christian crescents. Auld wives and bits o' weans mingled on the rig—kilted to the knees, like the comely cummers, and the handsome hizzies, and the lusome lassies wi' their silken snoods—among the heather-legged Highlandmen and the bandy Irishers, brawny all, and with hook, scythe, or flail, inferior to none of the children of men. The scene lies in Scotland—but now, too, is England “Merry England” indeed, and outside passengers on a thousand coaches see stooks rising like stacks, and far and wide, over the tree-speckled champaign, rejoice in the sun-given promise of a glorious harvest-home. Intervenes the rest of two sunny Sabbaths sent to dry the brows of labour, and give the last ripeness to the overladen stalks that, top-heavy with aliment, fall over, in their yellowy whiteness, into the fast reaper's hands. Few fields now—but one here and there—thin and greenish, of cold, unclean, or stony soil—are waving in

the shadowy winds—for all is reapt, or stooked stubble from which the stoeks are fast disappearing, as the huge wains seem to halt for a moment, impeded by the gates they hide, and then, crested, perhaps, with laughing boys and girls,

“Down the rough slope the ponderous wagon rings,”

no—not rings—for Beattie, in that admirable line, lets us hear a cart going out empty in the morning—but with a *cheerful dull* sound, ploughing along the black soil, *the clean dirt* almost up to the axletree, and then, as the wheels, rimmed you might almost think with silver, reach the road macadamized till it acts like a railway, how glides along down-hill the moving mountain! And see now the growing stack glittering with a charge of pitchforks! The trams fly up from Dobbin's back, and a shoal of sheaves overflows the mire. Up they go, tost from sinewy arms like feathers, and the stack grows before your eyes, fairly proportioned as a bee-hive, without line or measure, but shaped by the look and the feel, true almost as the spring-instinct of the nest-building bird. And are we not heartily ashamed of ourselves, amidst this general din of working mirthfulness, for having, not many hours ago, abused the jovial and generous autumn, and thanked heaven that he was dead? Let us retire into the byre with Shoosy, and hide our blushes.

Comparisons are odoriferous, and therefore, for one paragraph, let us compare autumn with spring. Suppose ourselves sitting beneath THE SYCAMORE. Oh! may we be buried in Bowness churchyard, by the banks of Windermere! Why comes the thought of death on such a lifelike day? Poets call spring Green-Mantle—and true it is that the groundwork of his garb is green—even like that of the proud peacock's changeful neck, when the creature treads in the circle of his own beauteous g'ory, and the scholar who may have forgotten his classics, has yet a dream of Juno and of her watchful Argus with his hundred, his thousand eyes. But the

coat of spring, like that of Joseph, is a coat of many colours. Call it patchwork if you choose,

“And be yourself the great sublime you draw,”

the tailor who wrote the Age. Many females, too, look on nature with a milliner's or a mantua-maker's eye—arraying her in furbelows and flounces. But use your own eyes and mine, and from beneath THE SYCAMORE let us two, sitting together in amity, look lovingly on the spring. Felt ever your heart before, with such an emotion of harmonious beauty, the exquisitely delicate distinctions of character among the lovely tribes of trees! That is BELLE-ISLE. Earliest to salute the vernal rainbow, with a glow of green gentle as its own, is the lake-loving alder, whose home, too, is by the flowings of all the streams. Just one degree fainter in its hue—or shall we rather say brighter—for we feel the difference without knowing in what it lies—stands, by the alder's rounded softness, the spiral larch, all hung over its limber sprays, were you near enough to admire them, with cones of the Tyrian dye. That stem, white as silver, and smooth as silk, seen so straight in the green sylvan light, and there airily overarching the coppice with lambent tresses, such as fancy might picture for the mermaid's hair, pleasant as is her life on that fortunate isle, is yet said by us, who vainly attribute our own sadness to unsorrowing things—to belong to a tree that *weeps*;—though a weight of joy it is, and of exceeding gladness, that thus depresses her pendent beauty, till it droops—as we think—like that of a being overcome with grief! Seen standing all along by themselves, with something of a foreign air and an exotic expression, yet not unwelcome or obtrusive among our indigenous fair forest trees, twinkling to the touch of every wandering wind, and restless even amidst what seemeth now to be everlasting rest, we cannot choose but admire that somewhat darker grove of columnar Lombardy poplars. How comes it that some sycamores so much sooner than others salute the spring? Yonder are some, but budding, as if yet the frost lay on the honeydew that protects the balmy germs. There are

others warming into expansion, half-budded and half-leaved, with a various light of colour visible in that sun-glint distinctly from afar. And in that nook of the still sunnier south trending eastward, lo! a few are almost in their full summer foliage, and soon will the bees be swarming among their flowers. A horse-chestnut has a grand oriental air, and like a satrap, uplifts his green banner—yellowing in the light—that shows he belongs to the line of the prophet. Elms are then most magnificent—witness Christ-Church walk—when they hang over head in heaven like the chancel of a cathedral. Yet here, too, are they august—and methinks “a dim religious light” is in that vault of branches just vivifying to the spring, and though almost bare, tinged with a coming hue that ere long will be majestic brightness. Those old oaks seem sullen in the sunshine, and slow to put forth their power, like the spirit of the land they emblem. But they, too, are relaxing from their wonted sternness—soon will that faint green be a glorious yellow—and while the gold-laden boughs stoop boldly to the storms with which they love to dally, bounds not the heart of every Briton to the music of his national anthem,

“Rule, Britannia,
Britannia rule the waves!”

The ash is a manly tree, but “dreigh and dour” in the leafing; and yonder stands an ash-grove like a forest of ships with bare poles like the docks of Liverpool. Yet, like the town of Kilkenny,

“It shines well where it stands!”

and the bare gray-blue of the branches, apart but not repulsive, like some cunning discord in music, deepens the harmony of the Isle of Groves. Contrast is one of the finest of all the laws of association, as every philosopher, poet, and peasant kens. At this moment, it brings, by the bonds of beauty, though many glades intervene, close beside that pale grey-blue leafless ash-clump, that bright, black-green pine-clan, whose “leaf fadeth never,” a glo-

rious Scottish tartan triumphing in the English woods. Though many glades intervene, we said ; for thou seest that BELLE ISLE is not all one various flush of wood, but bedropt, all over—bedropt and besprinkled with grass gems, some cloud-shadowed, some tree-shaded, some mist-bedimmed, and some luminous as small soil-suns, on which, as the eye alights, it feels soothed and strengthened, and gifted with a profounder power to see into the mystery of the beauty of nature. But what are those living hills of snow, or of some substance purer in its brightness even than any snow that falls and fades in one night on the mountain-top ! Trees are they—fruit-trees—the wild cherry that grows stately and wide-spreading even as the monarch of the wood—and can that be a load of blossoms ! Fairer never grew before poet's eye of old in the fabled Hesperides. See how what we called snow brightens into pink—yet still the whole glory is white, and fadeth not away the purity of the balmy snow-blush. Aye, balmy as the bliss breathing from virgin lips, when moving in the beauty left by her morning prayers, a glad fond daughter steals towards him on the feet of light, and as his arms open to receive and return the blessing, lays her innocence with smiles that are almost tears, within her father's bosom. Milton !

“As when to those who sail
Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are past
Mozambic, off at sea northeast winds blow
Sabæan odours from the spicy shore
Of Araby the Blest ; with such delay
Well pleased they slack their course, and many a league,
Cheer'd with the grateful smell, old Ocean smiles.”

Shut your eyes—suppose six months gone—and lo ! BELLE ISLE, in Autumn, like a scene in another hemisphere of our globe. There is a slight frost in the air, in the sky, on the lake, and midday is as still as midnight. But, though still, it is cheerful ; for close at hand, Robin Redbreast, God bless him, is warbling on the copestone of that old barn gable ; and though Millar-Ground Bay is half a mile off, how distinct the clank of the two oars, like one, accompanying that large wood-boat on its slow

voyage from Ambleside to Bowness, the metropolitan port of the queen of the lakes. The water has lost, you see, its summer sunniness, yet it is as transparent as ever it was in summer; and how close together seem, with their almost meeting shadows, the two opposite shores! But we wish you to look at BELLE ISLE, though we ourselves are almost afraid to do so, so transcendently glorious is the sight that we know will disturb us with an emotion too deep to be endured. Could you not think that a splendid sunset had fallen down in fragments on the isle that is called Beautiful, and set it all a-blaze! The woods are on fire, yet they burn not; beauty subdues while it fosters the flame; and there, as in a many-tented tabernacle, has Colour pitched his royal residence, and reigns in glory beyond that of any oriental king. What are all the canopies, and balconies, and galleries of human state, all hung with the richest drapery that ever the skill of Art, that wizard, drew forth in gorgeous folds from his enchanted loom, if ideally suspended in the air of imagination, beside the sun-and-storm-stained furniture of these palaces of Autumn framed by the spirit of the season, of her own living umbrage, for his own last delight, ere he move in annual migration, with all his court, to some foreign clime, far beyond the seas! No names of trees are remembered—a glorious confusion comprehends in one the whole leafy race—orange, and purple, and scarlet, and crimson, are all to be seen there, and interfused through the silent splendour is aye felt the presence of that terrestrial green, native and unextinguishable in earth's bosom, as that celestial blue is in that of the sky. That trance goes by, and the spirit, gradually filled with a stiller delight, takes down all those tents into pieces, and contemplates the encampment with less of imagination, and with more of love. It knows and blesses each one of those many glorious groves, each becoming, as it gazes, less and less glorious, more and more beautiful; till memory revives all the happiest and holiest hours of the Summer and the Spring, and repeoples the melancholy umbrage with a thousand visions of joy, that may return never more! Images, it may be, of forms and faces now mouldering in the dust! For all human hearts have felt

—and all human lips have declared—melancholy making poets of us all—aye, even prophets, till the pensive air of autumn has been filled with the music of elegiac and foreboding hymns—that, as is the race of leaves—now old Homer speaks—so is the race of men ! Nor, till time shall have an end, insensate will be any soul endowed “with discourse of reason” to those mysterious misgivings, alternating with triumphant aspirations more mysterious still, when the religion of Nature leans in awe on the religion of God, and we hear the voice of both in such strains as these—the earthly, in its sadness, momentarily deadening the divine :—

But when shall Spring visit the mouldering urn ?
O ! when shall it dawn on the night of the grave !

The observant reader will not have failed to notice, that throughout this Fytte we have spoken of all the seasons as belonging to the masculine gender. They are generally, we believe, in this country, painted in petticoats, apparently by bagmen, as may be daily seen in the pretty prints that bedeck the paper-walls of the parlours of inns. Spring is always there represented as a spanker in a blue symar, very pertly exposing her budding breast, and her limbs from feet to fork, in a style that must be very offensive to the mealy-mouthed members of that shame-faced corporation, the Society for the Suppression of Vice. She holds a flower between her finger and thumb, crocus, violet, or primrose ; and though we verily believe she means no harm, she no doubt does look rather leeringly upon you, like one of the frail sisterhood of the comeatables. Summer again is an enormous and monstrous mawsey, *in puris naturalibus*, meant to image Musidora, or the Medicean, or rather the Hottentot Venus.

“So stands the statue that enchants the world !”

She seems at the very lightest, a good round score heavier than Spring. And when you imagine her plunging into the pool, you think you hear a porpus. May no Damon

run away with her clothes, leaving behind in exchange his heart! Gadflies are rife in the dog-days, and should one "imparadise himself in form of that sweet flesh," there will be a cry in the woods that will speedily bring to her assistance Pan and all his Satyrs. Autumn is a motherly matron, evidently *enceinte*, and, like love and charity, who probably are smiling on the opposite wall, she has a brace of bouncing boys at her breast—in her right hand a formidable sickle, like a Turkish scimitar—in her left an extraordinary utensil, bearing, we believe, the heathenish appellation of Cornucopia—on her back a sheaf of wheat—and on her head a diadem—planted there by John Barleycorn. She is a fearsome dear;—as ugly a customer as a lonely man would wish to encounter beneath the light of a September moon. On her feet are bachles—on her legs huggers—and the breadth of her soles, and the thickness of her ankles, we leave to your own conjectures. Her fine bust is conspicuous in an open laced boddice—and her huge hips are set off to the biggest advantage, by a jacket that she seems to have picked up by the wayside, after some jolly tar, on his return from a long voyage, had there been performing his toilet, and, by getting rid of certain encumbrances, was enabled to pursue his inland journey with less resemblance than before to a walking scarecrow. Winter is a withered old beldame, too poor to keep a cat, hunkling on her hunkers over a feeble fire of sticks, extinguished fast as it is beeted, with a fizz in the melted snow which all around that unhoused wretchedness is indurated with frost; while a blue pool close at hand is chained in iciness, and an old stump half buried in the drift. Poor, old, miserable, cowering crone! One cannot look at her without unconsciously putting one's hand in his pocket, and fumbling for a tester. Yes, there is pathos in the picture, especially while, on turning round your head, you behold a big blockhead of a vulgar bagman, with his coat-tails over his arms, warming his loathsome hideousness at a fire that would roast an ox.

Such are the seasons! And though we have spoken of them, as mere critics on art, somewhat superciliously, yet there is almost always no inconsiderable merit in all prints, pictures, paintings, poems, or prose-works, that—

pardon our tautology—are popular with the people. The emblematical figments now alluded to, have been the creations of persons of genius, but, never having had access to the works of the old masters, though the conception is good, the execution is, in general, far from perfect. Yet many a time, when lying at our ease in a wayside inn, stretched on three wooden chairs, with a little round deal-table before us, well laden with oatmeal cakes and cheese and butter, nor, you may be sure, without its “tappit-hen”—have we after a long day’s journey—perhaps the longest day—

“Through moors and mosses many, O,”

regarded with no unimaginative spirit—when Joseph and his brethren were wanting—even such symbols of the seasons as these, till

“Flash’d before that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude,”

many as fair an image as ever nature sent from her woods and wildernesses to cheer the heart of her worshipper, who, on his pilgrimage to her loftiest shrines, and most majestic temples, spared not to stoop his head below the lowest lintel, and held all men his equal who earned by honest industry the scanty fare which they never ate without those holy words of supplication and thanksgiving, “Give us this day our daily bread!”

Our memory is a treasure-house of written and unwritten poetry—the ingots, the gifts of the great bards, and the bars of bullion—much of the coin our own—some of it borrowed, mayhap, but always on good security, and repaid with interest—a legal transaction, of which even a not unwealthy man has no need to be ashamed—none of it stolen, nor yet found where the Highlandman found the tongs. But our riches are like those that encumbered the floor of the sanctum of the Dey of Algiers, not very tidily arranged; and we are frequently foiled in our efforts to lay our hand, for immediate use or ornament, on a ducat or a diamond, a pistole or a pearl, a sovereign, or only his crown. We feel ourselves at this

moment in that predicament, when trying to recollect the genders of Thomson's "Seasons"—

"Come, gentle Spring! ethereal mildness come,
And from the bosom of yon dropping cloud,
While music wakes around, veil'd in a shower
Of shadowing roses, on our plains descend!"

That picture is indistinctly and obscurely beautiful to the imagination, and there is not a syllable about sex—though "ethereal mildness," which is an impersonation, and hardly an impersonation, must be, it is felt, a virgin goddess, whom all the divinities that dwell between heaven and earth must love. Never to our taste—but our taste is inferior to our feeling and our genius—though you will seldom go far wrong even in trusting it—never had poem a more beautiful beginning. It is not simple—nor ought it to be—it is rich, and even gorgeous—for the bard came to his subject full of inspiration, and as it was the inspiration, here, not of profound thought, but of passionate emotion, it was right that music at the very first moment should overflow the page, and that it should be literally strewn with roses. An imperfect impersonation is often proof positive of the highest state of poetical enthusiasm. The forms of nature undergo a half humanizing process under the intensity of our love, yet still retain the character of the insensate creation, thus affecting us with a sweet, strange, almost bewildering blended emotion that scarcely belongs to either separately, but to both together clings as to a phenomenon that only the eye of genius sees, because only the soul of genius can give it a presence—though afterwards all eyes dimly recognise it, on its being shown to them, as something more vivid, than their own faint experience, yet either kindred to it, or virtually one and the same. Almost all human nature can, in some measure, understand and feel the most exquisite and recondite image which only the rarest genius could produce. Were it not so, great poets might break their harps, and go down themselves in Helicon.

"From bright'ning fields of ether fair disclosed,
Child of the Sun, refulgent SUMMER comes,

In pride of youth, and felt through nature's depth :
 He comes, attended by the sultry hour,
 And ever-fanning breezes, on his way ;
 While, from his ardent look, the turning Spring
 Averts his blushful face, and earth and skies,
 All smiling, to his hot dominion leaves."

Here the impersonation is stronger—and perhaps the superior strength lies in the words "child of the sun,"—and in the words describing spring he too is more of an impersonation than in the other passage—averting his blushful face from the summer's ardent look. But the poet having made summer masculine, makes spring so too, which we cannot help thinking a flaw in this jewel of a picture. Ladies alone should avert their blushful faces from the ardent looks of gentlemen. Thomson, indeed, elsewhere says of an enamoured youth overpowered by the loving looks of his mistress,—

"From the keen gaze her lover turns away,
 Full of the dear ecstatic power, and sick
 With sighing languishment."

This, we have heard, from experienced persons of both sexes, is as delicate as it is natural; but for our own simple and single selves, we never remember having got sick on any such occasion. Much agitated, we cannot deny—if we did, the most credulous would not credit us—much agitated we have been—when our lady-love, not contented with fixing upon us her dove-eyes, began billing and cooing in a style from which the cushat might have taken a lesson with advantage, that she might the better perform her innocent part on her first assignation with her affianced in the pine-grove on St. Valentine's day—but never in all our long lives got we absolutely *sick*,—nor even *squeamish*,—never were we obliged to turn away with our hand to our mouth,—but on the contrary, we were commonly as brisk as a bee at a pot of honey; or, if that be too luscious a simile, as brisk as that same wonderful insect murmuring for a few moments round and round a rose-bush, and then settling himself down seriously to work, as mute as a mouse, among the half-blown petals. However, we are not now writing our

confessions—and what we wished to say about this passage is, that in it the one sex is represented as turning away the face from that of the other, which may be all natural enough, though polite on the gentleman's part we can never call it, and had the female virgin done so, we cannot help thinking it would have read better in poetry. But for Spring to avert *his* blushful face from the ardent looks of Summer, has on us the effect of making both seasons seem simpletons. Spring, in the character of "ethereal mildness," was unquestionably a female, but here she is "unsexed from the crown to the toe," and changed into an awkward hobblehoy, who, having passed his boyhood in the country, is a booby who blushes black at the gaze of his own brother, and if brought into the company of the lasses would not fail to faint away in a fit, nor revive till his face felt a pitcher-full of cold water.

"Crown'd with the sickle and the wheaten sheaf,
While Autumn, nodding o'er the yellow plain,
Comes jovial on," &c.

is, we think, bad. The impersonation here is complete, and though the sex of Autumn is not mentioned, it is manifestly meant to be male. So far there is nothing amiss either one way or another. But "nodding o'er the yellow plain" is a mere statement of a fact in nature,—and descriptive of the growing and ripening or ripened harvest,—whereas it is applied here to Autumn, as a figure who "comes jovial on." This is not obscurity,—or indistinctness,—which, as we have said before, is often a great beauty in impersonation—but it is an inconsistency and a contradiction,—and therefore indefensible on any ground either of conception or expression.

There are no such essential vices as this in the *Castle of Indolence*, for by that time Thomson had subjected his inspiration to thought,—and his poetry, guided and guarded by philosophy, became celestial as an angel's song.

"See Winter comes to rule the varied year,
Sullen and sad, with all his rising train,

Vapours and clouds and storms. Be these my theme,
 These! that exalt the soul to solemn thought
 And heavenly musing. Welcome, kindred glooms!
 Congenial horrors, hail! with frequent foot,
 Pleased have I, in my cheerful morn of life,
 When pleased with careless solitude I lived,
 And sung of nature with unceasing joy,
 Pleased have I wander'd through your rough domain,
 Trod the pure virgin snows, myself as pure,
 Heard the winds roar and the big torrents burst,
 Or seen the deep fermenting tempest brew'd
 In the grim evening sky. Thus pass'd the time,
 Till through the lucid slumbers of the south
 Look'd out the joyous Spring, look'd out and smiled!"

Divine inspiration indeed! Poetry, that if read by the
 bedside of a dying lover of nature, might

"Create a soul
 Under the ribs of death!"

Wordsworth—himself a poet of the first, but—strange as
 it is—a critic of the fourth order—yet not strange—for as
 a poet, to use his own fine words, he writes as one of the

"Sound healthy children of the God of heaven,"

as a critic, but as one of the dissatisfied sons of earth—
 labours to prove, in one of his "postliminious prefaces,"
 that the true spirit of the "Seasons," till long after their
 publication, was neither felt nor understood. In the con-
 duct of his argument, he does cut a poor lame figure.
 That the poem was at once admired, he is forced to
 admit—but then, according to him, the admiration was
 false and hollow—and it was regarded but with that
 wonder which is the "natural product of ignorance."
 After having observed that, excepting the Nocturnal
 Reverie of Lady Winchelsea, and a passage or two in
 the Windsor Forest of Pope, the poetry of the period in-
 tervening between the publication of the *Paradise Lost*
 and the *Seasons*, does not contain a single new image of
 external nature, he proceeds to call the celebrated verses
 of Dryden in the Indian Emperor, descriptive of the hush

of night, "vague, bombastic, and senseless," and Pope's translation of the celebrated moonlight scene in the Iliad, altogether "absurd,"—and then without ever once dreaming of any necessity of showing them to be so, or even if he had succeeded in doing so, of the utter illogicality of any argument drawn from their misery and wretchedness to establish the point he hammers at, he all at once says, with the most astounding assumption, "*having shown* that much of what his [Thomson's] biographer deemed genuine admiration, must, in fact, have been blind wonderment—how is the rest to be accounted for?" "*Having shown*"!!! Why he has shown nothing but his own arrogance in supposing that his mere *ipse dixit* will be taken by the whole world as proof that Dryden and Pope had not the use of their eyes. "Strange to think of an enthusiast," he says, (alluding to the passage in Pope's translation of the Iliad,) "as may have been the case with thousands, reciting those verses under the cope of a moonlight sky, without having his raptures in the least disturbed by a suspicion of their *absurdity*!" We are no enthusiasts—we are far too old for that folly—but we have eyes in our head, though sometimes rather dim and motey, and as good eyes too as Mr. Wordsworth, and we often have recited—and hope often will recite them again—Pope's exquisite lines, not only without any "suspicion of their absurdity," but with the conviction of a most devout belief, that with some little vagueness, perhaps, and repetition, and a word here and there that might be altered for the better, the description is at once beautiful and sublime. But grant it miserable—and grant all else Mr. Wordsworth has so dictatorially uttered—and what then? Though descriptive poetry may not have flourished during the period between Paradise Lost and the Seasons, did not mankind enjoy the use of their seven senses? Could they not see and hear without the aid of those oculists and aurists the poets? Were all the shepherds and agriculturists of England and Scotland blind and deaf to all the sights and sounds of nature, and all the gentlemen and ladies too, from the king and queen upon the throne, to the lowest of their subjects? Very like a whale. Causes there were why poetry flowed

during that era in another channel than that of the description of natural scenery—and if it flowed too little in that channel then—which is true—equally is it true that it flows now in it too much—especially among the poets of the Lake School, to the neglect—not of sentiments and affections—for there they excel—but of strong direct human passion applied to the stir and tumult—of which the interest is profound and eternal—of all the great affairs of human life. But though the descriptive poets during the period between Milton and Thomson were few and indifferent, no reason is there in this world for imagining with Mr. Wordsworth, that men had forgotten both the heavens and the earth. They had not—nor was the wonder with which they must have regarded the great shows of nature, the “natural product of ignorance,” then, any more than it is now, or ever was during a civilized age. If we be right in saying so—then neither could the admiration which the “Seasons,” on the first appearance of that glorious poem, excited, be said, with any sense or truth, to have been but a “wonder, the natural produce of ignorance.” Mr. Wordsworth having thus signally, and, we may say, shamefully, failed in his attempt to show that “much of what Thomson’s biographer deemed genuine admiration, must, in fact, have been blind wonderment,” let us accompany him in his still more futile and absurd efforts to show “how the rest is to be accounted for.” He attempts to do so after this fashion. “Thomson was fortunate in the very title of his poem, which seemed to bring it home to the prepared sympathies of every one; in the next place, notwithstanding his high powers, he writes a vicious style; and his false ornaments are exactly of that kind, which would be most likely to strike the undiscerning. He likewise abounds with sentimental commonplaces, that, from the manner in which they were brought forward, bore an imposing air of novelty. In any well-used copy of the ‘Seasons,’ the book generally opens of itself with the Rhapsody on Love, or with one of the stories, perhaps of Damon and Musidora. These also are prominent in our Collections of Extracts, and are the parts of his work,

which, after all, were probably most efficient in first recommending the author to general notice."

Thomson, in one sense, was *fortunate* in the *title* of his poem. But a great poet like Wordsworth might—nay ought, to have chosen another word—or have given of that word a loftier explanation, when applied to Thomson's *choice* of the Seasons for the subject of his immortal poem. Genius made that choice—not fortune. The "Seasons" are not merely the "*title*" of his poem, they are his poem, and his poem is the Seasons. But how, pray, can Thomson be said to have been *fortunate* in the *title* or the subject either of his poem, in the sense that Mr. Wordsworth means? Why, according to him, people knew little, and cared less, about the seasons! "The art of seeing had in some measure been learned!" That he allows—but that was all—and that all is but little—and surely far from being enough to have disposed people in general to listen to the strains of a poet who painted nature in all her moods, and under all her aspects. Thomson, then, we say, was either most *unfortunate* in the title of his poem, or there was not that indifference to, and ignorance of, natural scenery in the "wide soul of the world," on which Mr. Wordsworth so strenuously insists as part, or rather the whole, of his preceding argument.

The title, Mr. Wordsworth says, seemed "to bring the poem home to the *prepared sympathies* of every one!" What! to the prepared sympathies of those who had merely, in some measure, learned the "art of seeing," and who had "paid," as he says in another sentence, "little accurate attention to the appearances of nature!" Never did the weakest mind ever fall into grosser contradictions, than does here one of the strongest, in vainly labouring to bolster up a bad cause, or rather a silly assertion, which he has desperately ventured on, from a most mistaken imagination, that it was necessary to account for the kind of reception which his own poetry had met with from the present age. The truth is, that had Mr. Wordsworth known, when he indited these unlucky and helpless sentences, that his own poetry was, in the best sense of the word, a thousand times more popular

than he supposed it to be—and Heaven be praised, for the honour of the age, it was and is so—never had they been written, nor had he here and elsewhere laboured to prove, that, in proportion as poetry was bad, or rather as it was no poetry at all, has it been, and always will be, more and more popular in the age contemporary with the writer. That Thomson, in the Seasons, *often* writes a *vicious style*, is true; but it is not true that he always, or generally, does so. His style has its faults, no doubt, and some of them inextricably interwoven with the whole web of his composition. It is a dangerous style to imitate—especially to dunces. But its *virtue is divine*; and that *divine virtue*, even in this low world of ours, wins admiration more surely and widely than *earthly vice*, be it in words, thoughts, feelings, or actions, is a creed that we will not relinquish at the beck or bidding even of the great author of the Excursion. That many did—do—and will admire the bad or indifferent passages in the Seasons—won by their false glitter, or commonplace sentimentalism, is no doubt true; but the delight, though as intense as perhaps it may be foolish, with which boys and virgins, woman-mantua-makers, and man-milliners, and “the rest,” peruse the Rhapsody on Love,—one passage of which we have ventured a little way back to be facetious on,—and hang over the picture of Musidora undressing, while Damon watches the process of disrobement, panting behind a tree, will never account for the admiration with which the whole world hailed the “Winter,” the first of the Seasons published; during which, Thomson had not the barbarity to plunge any young lady naked into the cold bath, nor the ignorance to represent, during such cold weather, any young lady turning her lover sick by the ardour of her looks, and the vehemence of her whole enamoured deportment. The time never was—nor could have been—when such passages were generally esteemed the glory of the poem. Indeed, independently of its own gross absurdity, the assertion is at total variance with that other assertion, equally absurd, that people admired most in the poem what they least understand; for the Rhapsody on Love is certainly very intelligible, nor does there seem

much mystery in Musidora going into the water to wash and cool herself on a hot day. Is it not melancholy, then, to hear such a man as Mr. Wordsworth, earnestly, and even somewhat angrily, trying to prove that "these are the parts of the work which, after all, were probably most efficient in first recommending the author to general notice?"

With respect to the "sentimental commonplaces with which Thomson abounds," no doubt they were and are popular; and many of them deserve to be so, for they are on a level with the usual current of human feeling, and many of them are eminently beautiful. Thomson had not the philosophical genius of Mr. Wordsworth, but he had a warm human heart, and its generous feelings overflow all his poem. Those are not the most poetical parts of the "Seasons" certainly, where such effusions prevail; but still, so far from being either *vicious* or *worthless*, they have often a virtue and a worth that ought to be felt by the children of men. There is something not very natural in the situation of the parties in the story of the "lovely young Lavinia," for example, and much of the sentiment is commonplace enough; but will Mr. Wordsworth dare to say,—in support of his theory, that the worst poetry is always at first (and at last too, it would seem, from the pleasure with which that tale is still read by all simple minds) the most popular,—that that story is a bad one? We should like to hear him say so.

Mr. Wordsworth, in all the above false and feeble argumentation, is so blinded by his determination to see every thing in but one light, and that a most mistaken one, that he is insensible to the conclusion to which it all leads, or rather, which is involved in it. Why, according to him, *even now*, when people have not only learned the "art of seeing," a blessing for which they can never be too thankful, but when descriptive poetry has long flourished far beyond its palmiest state in any other era of our poetry, still are we poor common mortals who admire the "Seasons," just as deaf and blind now, or nearly so, to their real merits—allowed to be transcendent—as our unhappy forefathers were, when that poem first appeared,

“a glorious apparition.” The Rhapsody on Love, and Damon and Musidora, are still according to him, its chief attractions—its false ornaments—and its sentimental commonplaces—such as those, we presume, on the benefits of early rising, and,

“Oh ! little think the gay licentious proud !”

What a nest of ninnies must all man and womankind be in Mr. Wordsworth’s eyes !—And is the “Excursion” to be placed by the side of “Paradise Lost,” only during the Millennium ?

Such is the *reasoning* ! of one of the first of our living (or dead) English poets, against not only the people of Britain, but mankind. One other sentence there is which we had forgotten—but now remember—which is to help us to distinguish, in the case of the reception the “Seasons” met with, between “wonder and legitimate admiration !” “The subject of the work is, the changes produced in the appearances of nature, by the revolution of the year ; *and, undertaking to write in verse, Thomson pledged himself to treat his subject as became a poet !*” How original and profound ! Thomson redeemed his pledge, and that great pawnbroker, the public, returned to him his poem at the end of a year and a day. Now, what is the “mighty stream of tendency” of that remark ? Were the public, or the people, or the world, gulled by this unheard-of pledge of Thomson, to regard his work with that “wonder which is the natural product of ignorance ?” If they were so in his case, why not in every other ? All poets pledge themselves to be poetical, but too many of them are wretchedly prosaic—die and are buried, or, what is worse, protract a miserable existence, in spite of the sentimental commonplaces, false ornaments, and a vicious style. But Thomson, in spite of all these, leapt at once into a glorious life, and a still more glorious immortality.

There is no mystery in the matter—Thomson—a great poet—poured his genius over a subject of universal interest—and the “Seasons” from that hour to this—then, now, and for ever—have been, are, and will be, loved and

admired by all the world. Mr. Wordsworth ought to know that all over Scotland, "The Seasons" is an household-book. Let the taste and feelings shown by the Collectors of *Elegant Extracts* be poor as possible, yet Thomson's countrymen, high and low, rich and poor, have all along not only gloried in his illustrious fame, but have made a very manual of his great work. It lies in many thousand cottages. We have ourselves seen it in the shepherd's shieling, and in the woodsman's bower—small, yellow-leaved, tatter'd, mean, miserable, calf-skin-bound, smoked, stinking copies—let us not fear to utter the word, ugly but true—yet perused, pored, and pondered over by those humble dwellers, by the winter-ingle or on the summer brae, perhaps with as enlightened—certainly with as imagination-overmastering a delight—as ever enchained the spirits of the high-born and highly taught to their splendid copies lying on richly carved tables, and bound in crimson silk or velvet, in which the genius of painting strove to embody that of poetry, and the printer's art to lend its beauty to the very shape of the words in which the bard's immortal spirit was enshrined. "The art of seeing" has flourished for many centuries in Scotland. Men, women, and children, all look up to her lovely blue or wrathful black skies, with a weather-wisdom that keeps growing from the cradle to the grave. Say not that 'tis alone

"The poor Indian, whose untutor'd mind
Sees God in clouds, and hears him in the wind!"

In scriptural language, loftier even than that, the same imagery is applied to the sights seen by the true believer. Who is it "that maketh the clouds his chariot?" The Scottish peasantry—Highland and Lowland—look much and often on nature thus; and of nature they live in the heart of the knowledge and the religion. Therefore do they love Thomson as an inspired bard—only a little lower than the Prophets. In like manner have the people of Scotland—from time immemorial—enjoyed the use of their ears. Even persons somewhat hard of hearing, are not deaf to her waterfalls. In the sublime invocation to Winter, which we have quoted—we hear Thomson

recording his own worship of nature in his boyish days, when he roamed among the hills of his father's parish, far away from the manse. In those strange and stormy delights did not thousands of thousands of the Scottish boyhood familiarly live among the mists and snows? Of all that number he alone had the genius to "here eternize on earth" his joy—but many millions have had souls to join religiously in the hymns he chanted! Yea, his native land, with one mighty voice, has, nearly for a century, responded,

"These, as they change, Almighty Father, these
Are but the varied God!"

SONG-WRITING.

MOORE.

(Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, 1839.)

How many, we would ask, of the poets of the present day, have proposed to themselves any model of exalted beauty, to which, in their works, they have longed and laboured to conform; any radiant image of the first fair, finished and faultless in all its parts and proportions, that has robbed them of their rest, and haunted them in their dreams, still attracting them to a nearer contemplation of its excellence, and animating them to some effort by which they might gratify in themselves, and in some degree communicate to others, the love and delight with which it has filled their souls? How many of them even have dwelt with humbler admiration on the reflection of that primary excellence presented in the compositions of time-honoured genius, and have attempted to produce on their own age and country, and with themes of their own choice, analogous if not similar effects to those which have for ever embalmed the memory and influence of their classic prototypes? How many of our poets have asked of themselves with a heartfelt and assiduous importunity—

“What shall I do to be for ever known,
And make the age to come my own?”

How many have answered the inquiry by the exclamation—

“Hence all the flattering vanities that lay
 Nets of roses in my way;
 Hence the desire of honours and estate,
 And all that is not above fate !”

How many again have been actuated by the still nobler feeling, that the gift of poetry was bestowed upon them as a divine instrument for doing good, as much as for imparting pleasure, to their species, and that of this talent, as of every other, the God who gave it would demand a strict account !

But a few, we suspect, of those who have in our day desired or attained a poetical reputation, could lay claim to feelings or motives such as we have described. Yet, without some of these sources of inspiration, and, perhaps, more particularly without the highest and rarest that we have named, we do not believe that genuine poetical excellence, or lasting poetical fame, can possibly be achieved.

We know not the precise nature of the devotional sentiment that prompted the Pagan poet when he said—

“*Me vero primum dulces ante omnia Musæ,
 QUARUM SACRA FERÒ, ingenti percussus amore,
 Accipiant.*”

But the sentiment, however shadowy, that he was the servant and priest of the virgin daughters of Jove, must, amidst all the errors of heathenism, have supported the sweetest and stateliest of poets in his noble aspirations after piety and wisdom—after the beautiful and the good. In the days of Christianity the poetical office is not less than ever a sacred ministry ; and poets are an anointed priesthood, who have still holier and higher truths to proclaim, and feelings to infuse, than even the imagination that led Æneas into Hades could conjecture or comprehend. While living in a clearer light, and under a purer dispensation, it is still to us a virtual truth, that poetry is a virgin daughter of heaven, whose service can only be well and worthily performed by those who remember the sacredness of her origin, and the benevolence of her errand to the earth.

We are not about to enter on any denunciation of those who have perverted poetry to purposes or propensities of an unworthy nature, and have attempted to lend a new or an additional impulse to self-indulgence, by those graces and embellishments which were intended to adorn the awful form of virtue, and render her features more familiar and more attractive. We are not disposed to think that the influence of such writers is so extensively or so enduringly pernicious, as might at first be thought. We, indeed, consider that it is idle and unjust to declaim in this respect against the perversions of genius, or to exhort the true poet to employ his powers on such objects only as are glorious to himself, and profitable to his species. We doubt whether genius can exist at all, at least genius of a high class, without carrying in its own constitution a practical security against error and vice. There can be no great genius without an ardent longing, and an inextinguishable preference, for what is truly beautiful: and no highly endowed spirit can fail to see almost intuitively that virtue is beauty, and vice deformity. All the better parts of our nature—all the nobler views of our destiny—must have a charm in the eyes of the true poet which never can adorn their opposites. They must be more delightful as objects of contemplation—more inspiring and more satisfying as subjects of representation and developement. If we could conceive a painter, with an exquisite sense of form and colouring, who yet preferred to delineate the lifeless desert or the sickly swamp, before the fertile valley or the heaven-kissing hill; or whose human figures more readily exhibited the loathsomeness of disease and decay, than the purple light of health and happiness—we should imagine an anomaly something akin to that of a great poet, whose sensibility and enthusiasm were yet content to dwell on themes of frivolity and folly, to the exclusion of what was truly noble and touching in human character.

It is not our object here to inquire, in connexion with this view, in what manner some of the greatest poets have been led to devote a part of their powers to subjects of levity and license. Perhaps, in reference to the age and people whom they addressed, even this lowering of

their tone was necessary or serviceable to the perfect success of their mighty mission. The greatest poets, we are inclined to think, ought to embody in themselves the image both of the real and of the ideal world, to enable them the more effectually to convert the sensual vulgarities of the one into the spiritual sublimities of the other. Not without a profound and important meaning of this nature, is the glorious description of his own power by the noblest and wisest of his brotherhood:—

“The poet’s eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance *from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven.*”

Heaven must be the first object of its contemplation; but on the earth too, and on all objects of earthly interest, its glance must rest, till from this meaner world it is able to raise and refine its earthly disciples to an aptness for that region from which its power is derived, and in which its purposes terminate. The ribald or the rustic, who should be allured, by the merriment of Shakspeare’s buffoons or of Chaucer’s churls, to obtain even a glimpse of those exquisite revelations of purity and goodness to which these blemishes seem so strangely united, would prove to us the magic efficacy of those master minds, who, from their universal sympathies, even with the failings of their species, were able, by winning their confidence, to promote their amendment more quickly and more completely than a more rigid and repulsive instructor could have done.

But the apparent anomaly we have glanced at is no exception to our proposition—that genius is essentially pure. No great poet ever attempted to embellish error or vice with the charms of poetry, or to practise those deceptions in morality which are alone dangerous. A great poet is as incapable of deceiving others by specious vices or false combinations, as he is of being himself deceived by them. The wand of true genius is an Ithuriel’s spear:—

“No falsehood can endure
Touch of celestial temper, but returns
Of force to its own likeness.”

When we are told, then, of any who waste their genius upon unworthy subjects, we are inclined to conclude that they are not in reality possessed of that genius which they are accused of degrading. We infer that they are destitute of those powers and faculties which would enable them to contemplate and to create what was beautiful and pure, and would necessarily secure their affections from wandering to objects of moral aversion.

In like manner, we are in general inclined to think that where genius exists, it must be accompanied by the power, and must feel the necessity, of giving a high finish in language and imagery to all its works. The love of the beautiful combined with the creative faculty, cannot fail to produce in comparative perfection the object that it loves and labours to realize. The powers of thought and of expression were never known to be separated in the authors of classical antiquity; and in like manner, in our own nation, the two faculties have always gone hand in hand. The genius of Spenser, Shakspeare, and Milton, is not more exhibited in the greatness of their conceptions, than in the unimprovable felicity and beauty of their diction. Here, again, we are inclined to say, that slovenliness, or poverty of language, is not to be regarded as a result merely of carelessness, but as an indication of the absence of high genius.

It may be thought, that the remarks we are making are pitched on a key a great deal too high for the humble subject by which they have been suggested. But we cannot allow it to be said, that lyrical composition is to be measured by any different or lower rule than that which applies to other poetry. There is the same occasion and the same necessity for exhibiting genius in its true character in a few simple verses of a song, as in a much longer or more ambitious poem: and there are the same grounds for condemning in this department any attempt at poetry, which has not the pure and noble characteristics by which poetry always ought to be, and perhaps always is, distinguished.

The greatest poet of the present age has given us some, though not many, models of the species of composition of which we are now treating. We shall notice two of

them as examples at once of deep feeling, of poetical power, and of finished composition. We do not doubt that these poems are to be ascribed to the class of songs, though we have not heard of their being united to music; and we suspect there is no living composer, *οἷος νυν Βροτοῖς εἶσι*, who could do justice to their character, and more particularly to the exquisite tenderness of the shortest and best.

The first of the two is a beautiful picture of a widowed heart seeking relief in a removal from the scenes of departed happiness, and finding that the softened sorrow of sincere affection finds its only enjoyment in a return to those objects which remind it of what it has lost.

“ I travell’d among unknown men,
 In lands beyond the sea ;
 Nor, England ! did I know till then
 What love I bore to thee.

“ ’Tis past, that melancholy dream !
 Nor will I quit thy shore
 A second time ; for still I seem
 To love thee more and more.

“ Among thy mountains did I feel
 The joy of my desire :
 And she I cherish’d turn’d her wheel
 Beside an English fire.

“ Thy mornings show’d, thy nights conceal’d,
 The bowers where Lucy play’d ;
 And thine is, too, the last green field
 That Lucy’s eyes survey’d.”

Our next example needs no announcement to any of those to whom the name of Wordsworth or of poetry is dear.

“ She dwelt among the untrodden ways
 Beside the springs of Dove,
 A maid whom there were none to praise,
 And very few to love :

“ A violet by a mossy stone,
 Half hidden from the eye !
 Fair as a star, when only one
 Is shining in the sky.

“ She lived unknown, and few could know
 When Lucy ceased to be ;
 “ But she is in her grave, and, oh,
 The difference to me !”

We would rather be the author of one noble and finished composition, like this of Wordsworth's, than of an innumerable swarm of what the vulgar taste has called clever or charming songs—things with here and there a smart idea, and here and there a tolerable line, but for the most part consisting merely of disguised commonplace, or fanciful exaggeration, wrapped up in a threadbare dress of tawdry and tinselly language. The more we examine the beautiful lyric which we have just quoted, the more beautiful it will appear. It is simple in the extreme, without one word above the level of ordinary speech ; yet, from the innate nobility of the idea, how gracefully dignified, how powerfully pathetic ! A few plain words in the first verse introduce us at once to the sweet solitude of Lucy, a maid with few friends and no flatterers. The images in the second verse are new as they are beautiful, and are perfect poetical types of that lonely loveliness which they are intended to picture. Of the conclusion, it may perhaps be said, that it represents the sorrows of bereavement in the only way in which this can be perfectly done, by suggesting to the reader's mind the strength of their influence, from the impossibility of attempting to express them. This suppression of the utterance of profound grief has, we think, been aptly characterized as an example of the same high style of art which prompted Timanthes to veil the head of Agamemnon, in his picture of Iphigenia's sacrifice. “ Non reperiens,” as Quintilian well expresses it, “ quo dignè modo patris vultum posset exprimere, velavit ejus caput, et suo cuique animo dedit æstimandum.”

The lyrics of Moore are not of the same school as those we have just been examining. We have much respect

for Moore's talents, which are various and versatile, and have been elaborately improved by industry and practice. No song-writer has, perhaps, gathered his subjects from so many sources of erudition and imitation, and none has acquired greater readiness and dexterity in the use of his tools and materials. His natural wit and vivacity have saved him from the fault of being dull, and his enthusiastic love of his country has given to many of his effusions, that force and dignity which are ever the accompaniments of genuine feeling. But we question greatly whether Moore can lay claim to the gift of poetry in any lofty sense of the term. He seems to us to want the creative power and vivid vision of the true poet, and to have never, at least, risen from the region of fancy to that of imagination. We shall examine some of his principal songs, in hopes of discovering some marks of poetical fervour; but we suspect that, in general, it will be found that mere ingenuity has attempted to supply the place of genius. The very frivolous and wholly unpoetical themes which have often occupied his muse, seem to be a proof that her element is not much elevated above the earth. Nor do we recollect any truly great lyric composition that has fallen from his pen. But, perhaps, other causes may have produced this result, than the absence of poetical power. Moore has so long and so successfully carried on with his customers an African traffic in glass beads and Birmingham buttons, that he has never felt the necessity of offering them more substantial merchandise.

It is not easy to compare the characters of Moore and of Burns as lyrical poets. Their education, their habits, and their station, had essential differences, which materially influenced their poetry. The different circles of personal admirers surrounding them, must also have had an effect. The one could draw his thoughts from little else than the storehouse of his own feelings, or a narrow compass of vernacular literature: while the other has borrowed hints and images in every possible quarter,—from Herodotus to D'Herbelot, from Sappho to Shenstone, from the Fathers to the *Fancy*. The one was habitually surrounded by rude or humble companions, or by men of enthusiastic but irregular minds, and only occasionally

admitted to the condescending notice of rank or refinement. The other has, from his early years, been the friend and favourite of many whose social position, and whose attainments or pretensions in literature, gave them a right, or a claim, to a high place in the scale of fashion and of taste. Neither of these positions, perhaps, was favourable to the great lesson of self-knowledge, or to the production of works that would stand the test of elevated or rigorous criticism. But with all those disadvantages, and with many individual differences between them, each of them, whether by the force of genius or of talent, has attained an extensive and deserved popularity as a lyrical writer, particularly among his own countrymen; and has contributed not a little to the advancement of lyrical composition.

If we were to characterise the lyrical poetry of Moore, in reference to its most faulty peculiarities, we should say that he has the quaintness of Cowley, without his power; and the facility of Prior, without his adherence to nature. It is, indeed, very remarkable to see the extremes of learning and frivolity meeting together, and to find in the nineteenth century a revival of the metaphysical school of poetry at our pianofortes and supper-tables. It is certain, however, that Moore is full of those far-fetched fancies that were so liberally employed by the love poets of the earlier part of the seventeenth century to puzzle the heads, if they could not touch the hearts, of their mistresses. In every page of Moore we have examples of that perverseness of wit, which, in illustrating subjects of tenderness and passion, assembles together the most remote and discordant agreements, in a manner of all others the least indicative of true feeling in the poet, and the most destructive of it in his hearers. A good many illustrations of this tendency will occur in the course of the extracts we have afterwards to make.

The imitation of Prior's style in one department of Moore's compositions, may be evident, by recurring to the smoothness and colloquial ease of the following song, taken from the writings of his prototype, and which, except for the absence of any very extravagant conceits, we might almost have ascribed to the bard of Erin himself—

“Dear Chloe, how blubber’d is that pretty face ?
 Thy cheek all on fire, and thy hair all uncurl’d ;
 Pr’ythee quit this caprice ; and (as old Falstaff says)
 Let us ev’n talk a little like folks of this world.

“How canst thou presume thou hast leave to destroy
 The beauties, which Venus but lent to thy keeping ?
 Those looks were design’d to inspire love and joy :
 More ordinary eyes may serve people for weeping.

“To be vexed at a trifle or two that I writ,
 Your judgment at once, and my passion, you wrong :
 You take that for fact, which will scarce be found wit :
 ‘Od’s-life ! must one swear to the truth of a song ?

“What I speak, my fair Chloe, and what I write, shows
 The difference there is betwixt Nature and Art :
 I court others in verse ; but I love thee in prose :
 And they have my whimsies, but thou hast my heart.

“The god of us verse-men, (you know, child,) the Sun,
 How, after his journey, he sets up his rest :
 If at morning o’er earth ’tis his fancy to run :
 At night he declines on his Thetis’s breast.

“So, when I am weary’d with wandering all day,
 To thee, my delight, in the evening I come :
 No matter what beauties I saw in my way ;
 They were but my visits, but thou art my home.

“Then finish, dear Chloe, this pastoral war ;
 And let us like Horace and Lydia agree ;
 For thou art a girl as much brighter than her,
 As he was a poet sublimer than me.”

The style, we think, in which Moore most excels, is where simple tenderness of feeling is expressed in the simplest language, without aiming at imagery or ornament. He undoubtedly possesses sensibility, and often succeeds in giving utterance to it in a touching manner ; but he is not equally successful where he attempts to combine pathetic with imaginative ideas.

It must be observed, with regard to Moore’s lyrics, and the circumstance has no doubt greatly contributed to their success, that his peculiar and practical knowledge

of music enabled him to adapt them always, with perfect felicity in point of accent and articulation, to the melodies with which they are associated.

We shall give two examples of Moore's lighter lyrics, in which we think great facility of expression is united to any thing but facility of thought.

“ Oh ! had I leisure to sigh and mourn,
Fanny, dearest ! for thee I'd sigh ;
And every smile on my cheek should turn
To tears, when thou art nigh.
But, between love, and wine, and sleep,
So busy a life I live,
That even the time it would take to weep
Is more than my heart can give.
Then bid me not despair and pine,
Fanny, dearest of all the dears !
The love that is ordered to bathe in wine,
Would be sure to take cold in tears.

“ Reflected bright in this heart of mine,
Fanny, dearest ! thy image lies ;
But, oh ! the mirror would cease to shine,
If dimm'd too often with sighs.
They lose the half of beauty's light,
Who view it through sorrow's tear ;
And 'tis but to see thee truly bright
That I keep my eyebeam clear.
Then wait no longer till tears shall flow—
Fanny, dearest ! the hope is vain ;
If sunshine cannot dissolve thy snow,
I shall never attempt it with rain.”

It is certainly not easy to conceive more laborious trifling, or less enlivening mirth, than most of the images in this song. The two last lines are tolerable: but all the rest would have been poor, even as impromptus in a drawing-room, and are insufferable when delivered from the press, as the work for aught we know, of hours or days of mature meditation. To what persons, we would ask, is such a song as this addressed, either as a topic of persuasion or as a source of pleasure? It is thinking poorly of the sex, to imagine that the most sentimental semstress could be delighted or caught by it, if she un-

derstood what it meant. It is an incongruous monster, having no harmony of parts, and altogether false in feeling and taste. With the nonchalance and levity of libertinism in its general tone, it has the stiffness of operose study in its details, and is not calculated to please the gay, while it must be despised by the severe.

The next specimen we shall take from the Irish Melodies. It is in a different style, and professes to have more seriousness in its merriment.

“Come, send round the wine, and leave points of belief
 To simpleton sages, and reasoning fools;
 This moment’s a flower too fair and brief
 To be wither’d and stain’d by the dust of the schools.
 Your glass may be purple, and mine may be blue,
 But while they are fill’d from the same bright bowl,
 The fool who would quarrel for difference of hue,
 Deserves not the comfort they shed o’er the soul.

“Shall I ask the brave soldier, who fights by my side
 In the cause of mankind, if our creeds agree?
 Shall I give up the friend I have valued and tried,
 If he kneel not before the same altar with me?
 From the heretic girl of my soul shall I fly,
 To seek somewhere else a more orthodox kiss?
 No! perish the hearts and the laws that try
 Truth, valour, or love, by a standard like this!”

These lines, we presume, were written to advance the cause of Catholic Emancipation; but, although they have some spirit and plausibility, they are not very cogent, and resolve a good deal into a *petitio principii*. The novel though not striking illustration, of the blue and purple punch-glasses, will not appear very convincing, except to those who are already satisfied that differences in religion are equally unimportant as the colour of a drinking-cup—a sentiment which is probably not very prevalent among Protestants, and certainly not more so among Roman Catholics. The last verse, if it proves any thing, either as to public or as to private practice, seems to prove too much; as it establishes not only that different shades of Christian belief are to be overlooked, but that

we should without hesitation marry a Mahometan, or choose our public functionaries from the votaries of the vilest idolatry.

But it is wrong to try these trifles by any serious or any poetical standard. Let us turn to some more ambitious or more admired samples of Moore's lyrical powers.

And first, turning to the Irish Melodies. We presume that the "Meeting of the Waters" will be considered a fair specimen of Moore's more serious, though not of his most lofty style. Let us examine it.

"There is not in the wide world a valley so sweet,
As that vale in whose bosom the bright waters meet :
Oh ! the last rays of feeling and life must depart,
Ere the bloom of that valley shall fade from my heart.

"Yet it *was* not that nature had shed o'er the scene
Her purest of crystal and brightest of green ;
'Twas *not* the soft magic of streamlet or hill,
Oh, no ! it was something mere exquisite still.

"'Twas that friends the beloved of my bosom were near,
Who made every dear scene of enchantment more dear,
And who felt how the best charms of nature improve,
When we see them reflected from looks that we love.

"Sweet vale of Avoca ! how calm could I rest
In thy bosom of shade, with the friends I love best,
Where the storms that we feel in this cold world would cease,
And our hearts, like thy waters, be mingled in peace."

We doubt if there be much poetry here. The first verse is commonplace, and indifferently written. The distinction between a valley and a vale we do not understand. "Feeling and life" need not both be given : either will do. The image which connects the bloom of the valley with the rays of life and feeling, is either unmeaning, or is so obscurely presented to us, as to be no image at all. The first couplet of the second stanza reminds us less of the dreamy loveliness of natural scenery than of a neatly-covered dinner-table, well furnished with champagne and hock glasses : while the exclamation—

“O no! it was something more exquisite still,”

might in the same way be best applied to the gastronomic feelings, or is fitter to express the admiration of a cockney than of a poet in the midst of a mountain landscape. The third stanza is eminently prosaic. We do not happen to remember a more pedestrian passage in lyric poetry than the line—

“Who felt how the best charms of nature *improve*,”

nor is our opinion of the poet's powers of wing very much exalted by the little flutter that is attempted in the line that follows. We question if the last stanza is very congruous, as “a bosom of shade,” if there be such a thing, is better calculated to protect against a burning sky than against a cold world. The idea with which the song concludes, of hearts mingling like waters, is more of a quibble than of a poetical figure.

Our next example, we believe, is equally popular, but does not appear to be much more deserving of praise as a poetical effusion.

“Believe me, if all those endearing young charms,
Which I gaze on so fondly to-day,
Were to change by to-morrow, and fleet in my arms,
Like fairy-gifts fading away!
Thou wouldst still be adored, as this moment thou art,
Let thy loveliness fade as it will,
And around the dear ruin, each wish of my heart,
Would entwine itself verdantly still!

“It is not while beauty and youth are thine own,
And thy cheeks unprofaned by a tear,
That the fervour and faith of a soul can be known,
To which time will but make thee more dear!
Oh! the heart that has truly loved, never forgets,
But as truly loves on to the close,
As the sunflower turns to her god, when he sets,
The same look which she turn'd when he rose.”

There is a great deal of good feeling in the sentiment of this song; but we desiderate in it any poetical genius,

such as the subject is calculated to inspire. The lines are either quite prosaic, unrelieved by any novelty of thought or delicacy of expression; or tricked out with imagery little worthy of the theme which it is employed to adorn. The conclusion of the second stanza is very characteristic of its author,

“Around the *dear ruin* each wish of my heart,
Would entwine itself *verdantly still*,”

is entirely in that fanciful style, which is calculated to dissipate feeling by calling other and opposite faculties into play. But is the image thus presented to us a correct one? If we understand the poet he means to represent his mistress as a ruined building, and himself as an ivy-bush; and it is easy to compare the verdant embraces of the plant to the strong attachments of affections. But we think there is this confusion in the simile, that the ivy's clasp is not appropriately seen until the place becomes a ruin. Round the ruined tower or temple, ivy cannot be said to entwine itself verdantly *still*. It is only suffered to begin its addresses when the object of them is in ruins. The ivy, therefore, is not a true, any more than it is a natural or a pleasing representation of that love, which first bestows its adoration where there is youth and beauty, and continues faithful and unchanged in declension and decay. The sunflower in the end of the song, is, in its fabulous or fancied properties, a more correct similitude of enduring constancy. But, however appropriate it may be for the device of a valentine, or the seal of a billetdoux, we can scarcely conceive a lover of high and heartfelt emotions, descending to picture, by the sunflower and “her god,” the fond devotedness of his own noble spirit.

The following lines have at least the merit of expressing elegantly and easily ideas, which, though not striking or original, must always be pleasing from their tenderness and beauty. They were written, we believe, as a tribute to the memory of one whose genius and goodness well deserved the praises and the tears of poetry:—

“I saw thy form in youthful prime,
Nor thought that pale decay
Would steal before the steps of time,
And waste its bloom away, Mary!
Yet still thy features wore that light
Which fleets not with the breath,
And life ne’er look’d more truly bright
Than in thy smile of death, Mary!

“As streams that run o’er golden mines,
Yet humbly, calmly glide,
Nor seem to know the wealth that shines
Within their gentle tide, Mary!
So veil’d beneath the simplest guise,
Thy radiant genius shone,
And that which charm’d all other eyes,
Seem’d worthless in thine own, Mary!

“If souls could always dwell above,
Thou ne’er had’st left that sphere;
Or, could we keep the souls we love,
We ne’er had lost thee here, Mary!
Though many a gifted mind we meet,
Though fairest forms we see,
To live with them is far less sweet
Than to remember thee, Mary!”

There is some tenderness in reality, and more in appearance, in the lines we have next to quote; but we fear the details will not stand inspection.

“Has sorrow thy young days shaded,
As clouds o’er the morning fleet?
Too fast have those young days faded,
That even in sorrow were sweet.
Does Time, with his cold wing, wither
Each feeling that once was dear!
Come, child of misfortune! hither,
I’ll weep with thee, tear for tear.

“Has love to that soul so tender,
Been like our Lagenian mine?
Where sparkles of golden splendour
All over the surface shine.
But if in pursuit we go deeper,
Allured by the gleam that shone,
Ah! false as the dream of the sleeper,
Like love, the bright ore is gone.

“Has hope, like the bird in the story
That flitted from tree to tree
With the talisman's glittering glory—
Has hope been that bird to thee?
On branch after branch alighting,
The gem did she still display;
And, when nearest and most inviting,
Then waft the fair gem away?

“If thus the sweet hours have fled,
When sorrow herself look'd bright;
If thus the fond hope has cheated,
That led thee along so light;
If thus, too, the cold world wither
Each feeling that once was dear,—
Come, child of misfortune! hither,
I'll weep with thee tear for tear.”

We like the first verse; and, in particular, the lines that truly and tenderly represent the buoyant joyousness of early life, that even sorrow cannot depress. The ideas in the stanzas that follow, are too curiously wire-drawn to have much power to move us. We may relish a passing allusion to love's or “Hope's delusive mine;” but a detailed comparison of its disappointments with the failure of mining speculations in Wicklow, is any thing but poetical or pathetic. The second stanza altogether is very poorly and clumsily composed. It seems to run thus:—Has love been like the Lagenian mine, where, if you go below the surface, the bright ore “*like love*” is gone? The illustration is here illustrated by the original subject. It might have been asked at once with less trouble, has love been like love? The story from the Arabian nights is still more far-fetched, and is not more elevating or affecting. It is the constant recurrence in Moore's poetry of these ingenious, but too remote comparisons, that checks the current of our own feelings, by convincing us that the poet could not himself be much affected by his subject, when he had leisure to look so diligently about him for the images that were to express it. The simile of the Lagenian mines is peculiarly unfortunate, in reminding us of the “sparkles of golden splendour” which so often adorn the surface of the poet's own domain, without ensuring any very pro-

fitable result to those who may thence be induced "in pursuit to go deeper."

We think there is considerable power in our next example, though the rhythm is not melodious on the reader's lips, and the subject is not developed with all the imagination or the skill which its wild solemnity might admit of.

"Oh, ye dead! oh, ye dead! whom we know by the light you
give
From your cold, gleaming eyes, though you move like men who
live,

Why leave you thus your graves
In far-off fields and waves,
Where the worm and the sea-bird only know your bed,
To haunt this spot where all
Those eyes that wept your fall,
And the hearts that bewail'd you, like your own, lie dead?

"It is true! it is true! we are shadows cold and wan;
It is true! it is true! all the friends we loved are gone:
But oh! thus even in death,
So sweet is still the breath
Of the fields, and the flowers, in our youth we wander'd o'er,
That ere condemn'd we go,
To freeze 'mid Hecla's snow,
We would taste it awhile, and dream we live once more!

The song which we next insert seems a favourite with the poet's anti-Saxon countrymen, who probably rank it on the same level that has been assigned to Bruce's Bannockburn Address in this country. It is not throughout correctly written or powerfully conceived; but it possesses sufficient energy and enthusiasm to operate, we have no doubt, on an Irish mind like a spark upon tinder.

"O where's the slave so lowly,
Condemn'd to chains unholy,
Who, could he burst
His bonds at first,
Would pine beneath them slowly?
What soul whose wrongs degrade it,
Would wait till time decay'd it,
When thus its wing
At once could spring
To the throne of Him who made it?

Farewell, Erin!—farewell all
Who live to weep our fall!

“ Less dear the laurel growing,
Alive, untouch'd, and blowing,
Than that whose braid
Is pluck'd to shade
The brows with vict'ry glowing.
We tread the land that bore us,
Her green flag glitters o'er us,
The friends we've tried
Are by our side,
And the foe we hate before us!
Farewell, Erin!—farewell all
Who live to weep our fall!”

We close our extracts from the Irish Melodies with lines that we consider a happy and not vain-glorious description of the poet's efforts to marry the melodies of his country to verse, which, if not immortal, is very pleasing and very popular.

“ Dear Harp of my Country! in darkness I found thee,
The cold chain of silence had hung o'er thee long,
When proudly, my own Island Harp! I unbound thee,
And gave all thy chords to light freedom and song!
The warm lay of love, and the light note of gladness
Have waken'd thy fondest, thy liveliest thrill;
But so oft hast thou echo'd the deep note of sadness,
That even in thy mirth it will steal from thee still.

“ Dear Harp of my Country! farewell to thy numbers,
This sweet wreath of song is the last we shall twine;
Go, sleep, with the sunshine of fame on thy slumbers,
'Till touch'd by some hand less unworthy than mine.
If the pulse of the patriot, soldier, or lover,
Hath throb'd at thy lay, 'tis thy glory alone;
I was but as the wind, passing heedlessly over,
And all the wild glory I waked was thine own.”

The national melodies, and some of the other miscellaneous works of our author, will supply us with specimens of his poetry more favourable, we think, because more natural and simple, than any we have yet extracted.

No one can be insensible to the touching effect of those well-known verses, that tell us of the long-vanished pictures of youth and joy, that the silent darkness of night has power in the solitude of advancing years to restore to the mind's eye, with more vividness than the blaze of noon can now offer to the bodily sight :—

“ Oft in the stilly night,
 Ere Slumber's chain has bound me,
 Fond Mem'ry brings the light
 Of other days around me ;
 The smiles, the tears,
 Of boyhood's years,
 The words of love then spoken,
 The eyes that shone,
 Now dimm'd and gone,
 The cheerful hearts now broken !
 Thus in the stilly night,
 Ere Slumber's chain has bound me,
 Sad Mem'ry brings the light
 Of other days around me.

“ When I remember all
 The friends so link'd together,
 I've seen around me fall,
 Like leaves in wintry weather ;
 I feel like one who treads alone
 Some banquet-hall deserted,
 Whose lights are fled,
 Whose garlands dead,
 And all but he departed !
 Thus in the stilly night,
 Ere Slumber's chain has bound me,
 Sad Mem'ry brings the light
 Of other days around me.”

We cannot let these lines pass without protesting against an inaccuracy which makes us stumble at the very threshold. “ Stilly ” is not an adjective but an adverb ; and even the authority of the author of *Douglas* will not justify this anomalous use of it. But, indeed, the expression a “ stilly sound,” which means not a perfectly still sound, or no sound at all, but a *still-like* sound, is

not a precedent for "the stilly night," where the silence is as profound as this world will permit of. Passing over this blemish, we give our ready tribute of praise to the greater part of this admired and affecting song. We are not sure, however, that the image of the "banquet-hall deserted," is a pleasing or proper one. It is too much as if life were merely a revel, instead of being, as it is, the scene of silent and serene, as well as of rapturous and riotous, enjoyments. The picture of a deserted banquet-hall is no doubt a vivid object, but it comes home too much to our fancies, with its burnt-out candles, spilt liquor, and broken glasses, as one of the meanest as well as most miserable of sights. We could have wished some comparison had been chosen of a less depreciatory character, and which would have better represented the loneliness of him who worthily laments the loss of loves and friendships, which had higher and holier attractions than the feast or the wine-cup.

Our next extract, though not possessing any original ideas, is tender and melodious. But it ought to have stopped at the end of the fourth verse. In the fifth, the poet splits upon his old rock of fanciful and frigid simile.

"Then fare thee well ! my own dear love,
This world has now for us
No greater grief, no pain above
The pain of parting thus, dear love ! the pain of parting thus !

"Had we but known, since first we met,
Some few short hours of bliss,
We might in numb'ring them, forget
The deep, deep pain of this, dear love ! the deep, deep pain of this.

"But no, alas ! we've never seen
One glimpse of pleasure's ray,
But still there came some cloud between,
And chased it all away, dear love ! and chased it all away.

"Yet, e'en could these sad moments last,
Far dearer to my heart
Were hours of grief, together past,
Than years of mirth apart, dear love ! than years of mirth apart.

“Farewell! our hope was born in fears,
 And nursed 'mid vain regrets!
 Like winter's suns, it rose in tears,
 Like them in tears it sets, dear love! like them in tears it sets!”

The subject of our next quotation is worthy of all acceptance, and is prettily, though not powerfully, treated.

“Oh, no!—not e'en when first we loved,
 Wert thou as dear as now thou art;
 Thy beauty then my senses moved,
 But now thy virtues bind my heart.
 What was but Passion's sigh before,
 Has since been turn'd to Reason's vow;
 And though I then might love thee more,
 'Trust me, I love thee better now!”

“Although my heart, in earlier youth,
 Might kindle with more wild desire;
 Believe me, it has gain'd in truth
 Much more than it has lost in fire.
 The flame new warms my inmost core
 That then but sparkled on my brow;
 And though I seem'd to love thee more,
 Yet, oh, I love thee better now!”

We happen to remember a passage in Southerne's *Fatal Marriage*, which probably no one else remembers, but which, in its strange prosaic style, embodies the idea that Moore has here worked out. The turn of one of the lines would almost persuade us that the modern poet had the passage of his predecessor in his eye when he wrote his song.

“When yet a virgin, free and undisposed,
 I loved, but saw you only with my eyes:
 I could not reach the beauties of your soul.
 I have since lived in contemplation
 And long experience of your growing goodness.
What then was passion is my reason now.”

But how inferior are both of these descriptions to that other picture of a similar change of feeling towards a

beloved object, when time and familiar converse have transformed her from a shadowy vision of imagined perfection to a substantial reality of experienced excellence. Moore and all his tribe must here bow before the acknowledged master, not in poetry only, but in the power to feel, and the skill to express that admiration of woman's loveliness and worth, which can only be deeply implanted where the soil itself is deep. We gladly quote the poem we refer to, though we have no right to give it the name of a song.

“ She was a phantom of delight
When first she gleam'd upon my sight;
A lovely apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament;
Her eyes as stars of twilight fair;
Like twilight's too, her dusky hair;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful dawn;
A dancing shape, an image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and waylay.

“ I saw her on a nearer view,
A spirit yet a woman too!
Her household motions light and free,
And steps of virgin liberty;
A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet;
A creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food;
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

“ And now I see with eye serene
The very pulse of the machine;
A being breathing thoughtful breath,
A traveller between life and death;
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;
A perfect woman, nobly plann'd,
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a spirit still, and bright
With something of an angel light.”

We have always been much affected by the beauty and simplicity of the following lines of Moore, which are to be found in the *National Melodies*, adapted to a very plaintive Welsh air. The measure is peculiar, and may render some attention necessary to feel the full effect of the words when unconnected with music.

“Bright be thy dreams—may all thy weeping
Turn into smiles while thou art sleeping:
Those by seas or death removed,
Friends who in thy spring-time knew thee,
All thou’st ever prized or loved,
In dreams come smiling to thee!

“There may the child, whose love lay deepest,
Dearest of all, come while thou sleepest;
Still the same—no charm forgot—
Nothing lost that life had given;
Or if changed, but changed to what
Thou’lt find her yet in heaven.”

This, among other examples, we think, will illustrate our position, that Moore’s talents are best shown where the natural goodness and sensibility of his heart can be seen through the simplest and least ornamental language. Indeed, we might ask whether it is not generally the best and always the safest plan to select as the expression of our ideas, a style that shall be as colourless and transparent as the air that is the medium of sight, and seek only to enliven the picture by the real hues and forms of the objects that are represented.

There is neatness and sprightliness in the following specimen of a different character:—

“How oft, when watching stars grow pale,
And round me sleeps the moonlight scene,
To hear a flute through yonder vale
I from my casement lean.
‘Oh! come, my love!’ each note it utters seems to sa —
‘Oh! come, my love! the night wears fast away!’
No, ne’er to mortal ear
Can words, though warm they be,
Speak passion’s language half so clear
As do those notes to me!

"Then quick my own light lute I seek,
 And strike the chords with loudest swell;
 And though they nought to others speak,
 He knows their language well.
 'I come, my love!' each sound they utter seems to say—
 'I come, my love! thine, thine, till break of day!
 Oh! weak the power of words,
 The hues of painting dim,
 Compared to what those simple chords
 Then say and paint to him."

We conclude these miscellaneous extracts with a song, which, allied as it has been to the poet's own music, has seldom been sung by any one, and never by its author, without producing delightful emotions. It is well conceived, and very pleasingly written.

THE MEETING OF THE SHIPS.

"When o'er the silent seas alone,
 For days and nights we've cheerless gone:
 Oh! they who've felt it know how sweet,
 Some sunny morn a sail to meet.

 "Sparkling at once is every eye,
 'Ship ahoy! ship ahoy!' our joyful cry;
 While answering back, the sounds we hear.
 'Ship ahoy! what cheer, what cheer?'

 "Then sails are back'd—we nearer come—
 Kind words are said of friends and home;
 And soon, too soon, we part with pain,
 To sail o'er silent seas again."

The sacred songs of Moore are not of a very high class. They are too much tinged with his characteristic peculiarities of illustration, which, unsuitable in all earnest or impassioned poetry, are still less admissible when heaven inspires the song, and when the solemnity of the subject should repress all feelings that are not humble or sublime. We shall give one example of his style in this department, not so much because it is more striking, as because, in point of taste, it is less exceptionable than most of the others.

"The turf shall be my fragrant shrine;
My temple, Lord! that arch of thine;
My censer's breath the mountain airs,
And silent thoughts my only prayers.

"My choir shall be the moonlight waves,
When murmuring homeward to their caves,
Or when the stillness of the sea,
Even more than music breathes of Thee!

"I'll seek by day some glade unknown,
All light and silence, like thy throne;
And the pale stars shall be, at night,
The only eyes that watch my rite.

"Thy heaven, on which 'tis bliss to look,
Shall be my pure and shining book,
Where I shall read, in words of flame,
The glories of thy wondrous name.

"I'll read thy anger in the rack
That clouds awhile the day-beam's track;
Thy mercy in the azure hue
Of sunny brightness breaking through!

"There's nothing bright, above, below,
From flowers that bloom to stars that glow,
But in its light my soul can see
Some feature of thy Deity!

"There's nothing dark, below, above,
But in its gloom I trace thy love;
And meekly wait that moment when
Thy touch shall turn all bright again."

This is well: but it reminds us of something better in the "Labourer's Noonday Hymn;" telling us, in something of a similar strain, that even where the stately temples of human workmanship are inaccessible, the God of Nature has not therefore dispensed with our devotions, but has provided a place for his worship wherever the thankful knee can be bent, or the prayerful hand uplifted.

"Why should we crave a hallow'd spot?
An altar is in each man's cot—
A church in every grove that spreads
Its living roof above our heads."

In bringing this criticism to a close, we think we may say that we have brought together a great and remarkable variety of lyrical specimens, sufficient to demonstrate, that, if Moore is deficient in the higher powers of poetical conception and delineation, he is at least possessed, in no ordinary degree, of that species of talent which borders on genius, and which, under the regulation of a purer taste, or with the check of a less "indulgent public," might have produced a great deal that was well worthy of a fond remembrance. Even as it is, we conceive that he has contributed liberally to confer its due honour on lyrical poetry ; and that much pleasure, and not a little instruction, both by way of beacon and of example, may be derived from the study of his compositions.

THE END.

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